

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

THURSDAY, 26 AUGUST 1886

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ERRATA.

August 26.—Page 527, column 2, lines 16 and 24, in Mr. Nelson's speech. for the word
“Warwick” *read* “Warra.”

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

Thursday, 26 August, 1886.

Petitions.—Formal Motion.—Motion for Adjournment—
Claims of O'Rourke and McSharry—Order of
Business.—Messages from the Legislative Council—
Pacific Island Labourers Bill—Elections Tribunal
Bill.—Land-grant System of Immigration.—Immi-
gration Act of 1882 Amendment Bill.—Ways and
Means.—Financial Statement.—resumption of Com-
mittee.—Adjournment.

The SPEAKER took the chair at half-past
3 o'clock.

PETITIONS.

Mr. FOOTE presented a petition from over
2,000 of the women of Queensland, praying for
the repeal of the Contagious Diseases Act; and
moved that it be read.

The SPEAKER: I have to call the attention of hon. members to the fact that the petition presented by the hon. member cannot be read or received by the House. The petition is printed, and that is quite contrary to the Standing Orders. Every petition presented must be in manuscript, and the signature of one of the petitioners must be attached to the manuscript copy.

Petition, with the permission of the House, withdrawn.

Mr. FRASER presented a petition from the minister, office-bearers, and congregation of Belle Vue Presbyterian Church, South Brisbane, praying for the repeal of the Contagious Diseases Act; and moved that the petition be read.

Question put and passed, and petition read by the Clerk.

On the motion of Mr. FRASER, the petition was received.

Mr. DONALDSON presented a petition from 160 of the residents of Thargomindah and district, praying for an amendment of the Crown Lands Act of 1884; and moved that the petition be read.

Question put and passed, and petition read by the Clerk.

On the motion of Mr. DONALDSON, the petition was received.

FORMAL MOTION.

The following formal motion was agreed to:—

By Mr. McWHANNELL—

That there be laid upon the table of the House, a return showing the amount of duty collected on goods brought into this colony borderwise from South Australia in the years 1884, 1885, and up to the 30th June, 1886.

MOTION FOR ADJOURNMENT.

CLAIMS OF O'ROURKE AND McSHARRY.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL said: Mr. Speaker,—I rise to call the attention of the House to some papers which have been before us for some time, and I shall conclude with the usual motion for adjournment. The papers to which I allude are those concerning the claims of McSharry and O'Rourke with respect to the Brisbane Valley Railway and the Bundaberg Railway, and in passing the remarks I shall have to make on them I intend to adhere strictly to the facts brought before us. I hope, sir, I shall not have motives of malice or ill-feeling or personal feeling of any kind attributed to me, as has been the case before in this Assembly when I have, in pursuance of my duty, deemed it necessary to rather harshly criticise some of the matters which came to my knowledge in connection with the action of the late Government with regard to these very same contractors. I will preface my remarks by saying that, having read and carefully considered this correspondence and these claims and these awards, there is only one of two conclusions to which any sensible or intelligent man can come, and that is that either these claims are the most preposterous, outrageous claims that ever were made, or that the Chief Engineer is totally unfit for the position he occupies. That is to say, if the awards which he writes down as against the claims made by the contractors are really and truly the just awards, and the fair awards, these claims must be most ridiculous, most preposterous, and most outrageous. On the other hand, if he has not made a fair award, the sooner he is out of the position he holds the better. Now, in taking this step of moving the adjournment of the House, I hope further to elicit some reply from the Minister for Works and the Chief Secretary as to what has become of these claims, or what is to

become of them? Are they to lie in the office waiting for their successors, whoever they may be, to deal with them? Are they to lie there dormant and not be dealt with according to their merits? I do not wish to see any contractors defrauded or done out of their lawful dues by the Government. On the other hand, I do not want to see the people of the colony robbed by any contractor whatever. I wish to see fair play between the contractors of the colony and the people of the colony. According to the conditions of contract which are in existence, the contractors are debarred from appealing to a court of law if they are dissatisfied with the decision of the Chief Engineer. The conditions of contract are made very stringent in that way, so as to prevent the people of the colony being put to useless expenditure for law costs. For the most part the contractors have to trust to the honour of the officers of the department—to trust to their ability as well as to their honour and integrity in deciding whether claims are right or wrong. Up to the present I have not noticed that there has been any lack of contractors through these conditions, but on the contrary I have observed that men readily tender for any railway contracts which may be given under these very conditions, being willing to trust themselves to the honour, the integrity, and ability of the officers of the department. But though the contractors cannot appeal to a court of law, they have the right always of appealing to the Executive Council. They can, if they consider they have been hardly dealt with, bring that harsh dealing before the Minister for Works, who, I have no doubt whatever, will bring it under the notice of his colleagues. There is nothing in the correspondence respecting the claims of Messrs. McSharry and O'Rourke in regard to the Brisbane Valley and Bundaberg Railways to show that the contractors appealed to the Executive Council, and, therefore, I can only arrive at the one inference—the obvious inference—that they are not content to submit their claims to the present Government, but are waiting for their successors, whoever they may be, to come into office—for the turn of the tide and for a change of Ministry. We have seen before what an abundant power the Minister for Works has—how he can pass claims disallowed by the Chief Engineer, or superintending engineer; how by a scratch of his pen he can override the lot and do what he chooses, and that without delaying to submit the matter to the Executive Council or get his action ratified by them in any way. However, I think it is a good thing that the people of the colony should be made aware of some particulars in this correspondence. Therefore I propose to quote several passages from it which bear principally upon the subject, with the view of having them inserted in *Hansard*. Hon. members who have read the correspondence will not need the information, but it will be of interest to the public. The first extract which I will read is from a letter addressed by the Chief Engineer to the Minister for Works, on the 18th of November, 1884. Among other things it says:—

“On the 17th June, and again on the 19th July last, when the final measurements had been completed by the officers of this department, I wrote to Messrs. O'Rourke and McSharry informing them that I was prepared to go into the final settlement of the contract, and would appoint a day to consider the final certificate upon their furnishing a statement of their claim against the department. This step is in accordance with the conditions of contract, as well as the usual practice in the profession.

“After waiting a month, a reply to my first letter was received, dated 16th July, 1884, in which the contractors stated that upon receipt of my final certificate they would furnish a statement of any claims it did not

include. They also drew attention to the fact of no certificate having been paid them since the month of February, and requested that this matter might be rectified as soon as possible.

"To this I replied that 'the rendering by them of an account of work executed or claims they may have against the department must precede the preparation of my final certificate,' as it was manifestly impossible to arrive at this until the whole of the claims have been investigated and decided by me in terms of the conditions of contract."

It appears that these contractors expected the Chief Engineer's department to furnish them with a final certificate of the work done, entirely reversing the usual order of things. The letter goes on to say that—

"With respect to the cessation of payments, I pointed out that in terms of the 21st clause of the General Conditions I was precluded from giving any certificate after the expiration of the contract date until the whole of the works had been satisfactorily completed."

Well, I can see nothing unfair in that. Then with regard to the first section of the Brisbane Valley line, Mr. Stanley says that on the 22nd September, in the same year, he addressed the contractors very much to the same effect, and to that communication no reply was received up to the 18th of November, 1884; so that the responsibility of any delay rested entirely with the contractors. However, on the 16th December, 1884, Messrs. O'Rourke and McSharry wrote as follows to the Chief Engineer:—

"As we are desirous of dispensing with the services of several of our officers, who are being retained by us as witnesses in connection with the above work, we would like, if you could make it convenient, to investigate the claims of the above contract immediately on presentation of the same."

To which Mr. Stanley replied on the 18th December in these words:—

"In reply to your letter of the 16th instant, I have the honour to refer you to my letters of the 17th June and 18th July last in which I expressed my readiness at that time to appoint a day to consider the final certificate upon your rendering a statement of your claims. I have only to add that upon receipt of your claims I shall arrange an early date to investigate the same, and will endeavour to meet your wishes by concluding the investigation with such despatch as my other duties will permit of."

Everything goes to show that Mr. Stanley was urging them or hurrying them up to send in their claims six months before they did. At last there comes in a claim for excess of work on the contract for No. 2 section of the Bundaberg Railway. The original contract price was £112,502 10s. The claim for excess works amounts to £38,351 3s. 11d.—or 25 per cent. on the contract price. This, compared with the Brisbane Valley claim, is a very moderate sort of claim, as it is only about 25 per cent. of an addition to the original contract price. I will read a few of the huge items in it with a view of comparing them with what the engineer awards, and to let the people of the country see what sort of claims can be sent in without any apparent grounds at all. I will take first claim, No. 30:—

"Floating exposed faces of soffit of arch and side walls of concrete culverts, 7,200 sq. yds. at 5s.—£1,800."

"No. 31.—Floating retaining wall at 47 miles 52 chains, 31 sq. yds. at 5s.—£7 15s."

That is a small one.

"No. 33.—Excavation from tunnel outside not dimensions, 520 c. yds. at £2 10s.—£1,300."

Taking the first claim, No. 30, the floating business, I find it is not entirely disregarded by the engineer, but he makes small allowances of £287, £6, and £2 for these claims; altogether something under £300 for claims which they make out amount to nearly £2,000. On the claim for excavation of the tunnel he appears to have recognised that some additional work

was done, and allows for it 400 cubic yards at £1 10s., or £600 out of the £1,300 they asked. I pass over a lot of smaller claims, and come to claim 49:—

"Additional cost of ballast, caused by the district engineer refusing to allow gravel and stone to be mixed—17,100 c. yards at 2s. 6d.—£2,137 10s."

The Engineer-in-Chief allows for that—

"Refusing gravel and stone to be mixed, 8,843 c. yards at 1s.—£442 3s."—

within about a fifth of what they asked. Then we have—

"Claim 52.—Extra cost of sleepers owing to the district engineer refusing to pass dry sleepers, 51,030 at 9d.—£1,913 12s. 6d."

I do not say these were "walking sleepers." If they were, I suppose they would be passed in. However, the Chief Engineer's award is for 6,725 sleepers at 20s. per hundred, or £67 5s. 5d.

"Claim 53.—Laying half-round sleepers in place, 51,030, at 2s. 6d., £6,378 15s."

That the Chief Engineer does not make any award at all about, I presume, because it was included in the original contract, and was what they were intended to do.

"Claim 58.—Extra maintenance, caused by engines being unsuited for the line, 21 61 miles, at £50, £1,298 8s."

I think it more likely that the line was unsuitable for the engines. However, the engineer recognises that the engines were unsuitable, and allows for extra maintenance £324. I next turn to claim 63—

"Cost of keeping the permanent way in repair from the date of commencement of plate-laying to the date of commencement of maintenance—£2,000."

The Chief Engineer does not allow anything for that.

"Claim 70.—Loss on account of being supplied with an insufficient number of ballast trucks—£1,080."

The Chief Engineer allows for that £257. Then we come to the wind-up, and there are some most extraordinary claims—and pretty big ones, too—there.

"Claim 87.—Loss on account of delays in furnishing plans—£1,000."

Nothing allowed for that.

"Claim 88.—Loss on account of alterations and stoppages to work—£500."

"Claim 90.—Loss on account of undue interference on the part of the district engineer on the works—£500."

It would appear to have been his duty to interfere occasionally.

"Claim 91.—Loss sustained by the district engineer divulging our prices to the men employed by us—£3,000."

Look at that, and the Chief Engineer does not award anything for that!

"Clause 92.—Loss sustained through the district engineer furnishing our employes with statements of measurements of various works; also on account of his urging men on to take legal proceedings against us—£300."

I suppose the district engineer in the execution of his duty considered it necessary to prevent these contractors swindling their men. He gave information to preclude their doing so, and I think most hon. members and most of the people of the country will agree with me that he was perfectly entitled to do so. The whole tots up to the respectable amount of £38,351 3s. 11d., and the total amount of the award is £3,439 8s. 11d., so that there was evidently a trifling difference of opinion. Upon receipt of the statement of claims I find the Chief Engineer replied promptly on the 23rd December:—

"I have the honour to acknowledge receipt of your letter of the 19th instant, covering statement of claims in connection with the above contract, and beg to inform you that I will appoint a day to investigate these claims so soon as possible after my return to Brisbane on the 5th proximo."

He seems to have acted as promptly as he could. On the 3rd February, 1885, he writes to say—

"After waiting for fully six months for a statement of your claims I recently devoted several entire days, much to the inconvenience of the other work of my department, to their investigation, and completed this so far as it was possible without a personal inspection of certain matters on the ground. This inspection, I informed you, would be made so soon as my other engagements would permit, and I have now arranged to proceed to Bundaberg at the end of the present week for that purpose."

The result of his proceeding to Bundaberg was that he arrived at the conclusion that there was about £3,439 due out of their claim. The Chief Engineer then received the following letter from Messrs. O'Rourke and McSharry:—

"Sir,—Referring to a conversation held by you with our agent, Mr. Frew, yesterday afternoon, wherein you tendered him the sum of £4,733 8s. 8d. as a final settlement of the above contract, we now beg to express our dissatisfaction at your awards on our claims, and trust that you will see fit to increase the above payment to such an extent as we consider justice demands."

That, I presume, they put down at £38,351.

"Pending this we beg to request that you will pay in the above amount to our credit without delay. Trusting you will favour us with an early reply."

Well, of course, Mr. Stanley does not pay the amount until he gets the final certificate. Quite right. In any ordinary business establishment outside the Government departments, precisely the same course is always followed. I do not see why the Government should be put at any disadvantage as compared with business people. Then they write again on the 9th of April, 1885:—

"Would you please be good enough to pay into our credit, without delay, the sum of £4,733 8s. 8d., which amount you have certified to as being due to us on the above contract, and which you signed vouchers for on the 21st ultimo."

Then on the 10th April Mr. Stanley writes back, pointing out that he had not certified to the sum of £4,733 8s. 8d. as being due on the contract:—

"As already verbally explained to you, the vouchers signed by you 'under protest' were not forwarded on to the Commissioner, as, upon a reconsideration of the matter, I decided to withhold my certificate thereto until such time as you agreed to accept the amount awarded by me as a final settlement of the contract in accordance with the provisions of the 40th clause of the General Conditions."

Well, that ends the Bundaberg business, and it is allowed to lapse. It remains now in a state between heaven and earth; you don't know what is going to happen. They make a fresh start on the 22nd of September, 1884, with the Brisbane Valley line. Mr. Stanley advises them on that date that the final measurements of the work have been completed:—

"I am prepared to appoint a day convenient to you for the consideration of the final certificate on your furnishing me with a statement of work executed under the contract, together with any other claims you may have against the department."

"As I understand the measurements generally have been mutually agreed upon between Mr. Gibbins and your representative, there will be no difficulty, I presume, in at once entering upon this investigation with a view to preparing my final certificate, so that the moneys due to you in terms of the 18th clause of the General Conditions may be paid."

In reply to that on the 19th of December, nearly three months afterwards, they write:—

"Sir,—With reference to the retention of moneys due on the above section, we beg to point out to you that up to the present time we have only received a little over £30,000, whilst your district engineer's final certificate shows about £39,000, without including anything for maintenance. We therefore beg to request that you will inquire into this matter, after which we feel sure you will accede to our request, and pay into our credit such sums as are manifestly and justly due on the above work, especially when you take into consideration the heavy losses sustained by us owing to the irregular and inadequate supply of permanent-way material."

Eventually, on the 3rd of September, 1885, nearly a year after the correspondence began, a letter comes from the solicitor for Messrs. O'Rourke and McSharry to say—

"I have the honour, at the request of Messrs. O'Rourke and McSharry, to forward you the accompanying statement of claims on the Brisbane Valley Branch Railway contract."

Now, I may state that the original contract price for this line was £42,209. The money paid in the usual way on monthly vouchers was £41,528. In addition to that there is a claim for £56,878. If this is not a perfect farce of a claim—a most outrageous claim on the very face of it, one never came under my notice before. It is utterly absurd that when a line has been contracted for at £42,209, and £41,528 actually paid, there should be any possibility whatever of a claim being raised for £56,000 in addition. There are a whole lot of little items. I will pass on to some of the principal ones, as I do not wish to take up more time than I can help:—

"Claim 41.—Additional expense procuring extra ballast from Bundamba, 4,435 yards at 12s.—£2,661."

I wonder if the hon. member for Bundamba knows anything about that.

"Claim 44.—Extra cost of sleepers, owing to the district engineer refusing to pass sleepers over 12 inches wide, 27,000 at 1s. 8d.—£2,250."

Well, the Chief Engineer pays no attention to that.

"Claim 45.—Laying half-round sleepers in place, 47,208 at 1s. 8d.—£3,934."

"Claim 46.—Additional expense unloading rails from cattle trucks—£61 5s."

Well, the Commissioner allows £39 for that.

"Claim 52.—Extra maintenance caused by the rolling-stock being unsuitable to the line—£1,500."

I wonder whether it was that the line was unsuitable to the rolling-stock.

"Claim 55.—Loss on account of engine supplied by Government only running ten miles per hour—£1,100."

"Claim 58.—Loss sustained by breach of contract, on the part of the Government, in delivering the permanent-way material at Ipswich, instead of at the Junction; also in delivering it irregularly and not in sufficient quantities—£12,000."

That is a pretty good one.

"Claim 62.—Loss owing to breach of contract in letting the erection of gate-cottage to someone else, without our consent—£930."

That is a curious claim. I should have thought it was a good deal more than the cottage was worth. Then we come to claim 63, loss on account of delay in furnishing plans and instructions, £1,800; claim 64, loss on account of work being short-returned, £5,000; claim 67, loss caused by the district engineer ordering us to keep within a certain distance of the plate-layers with the forming, £2,700; claim 68, loss occasioned by the indecision, harassing, undue interference, and incompetency displayed towards us in the carrying out of our contract, £3,300; claim 69, loss owing to the maintenance, under the contract, not being allowed to commence to Fernvale on January 1st, 1884, and to Lowood on February 12th, same year, £3,255; and claim 70, loss and damage sustained on account of the maintenance of the line being taken out of our hands on July 11th, 1884, to allow of the department making certain alterations from the original design, which were previously clearly shown to be necessary to render the proper maintenance of the line practicable, £5,000; totting up to the respectable total of £56,878 4s. 8d. When the Chief Engineer received these claims he, after considering them and looking into the work, makes up his award—the sum-total being £802—which he duly furnishes them with. Naturally, they are not very well contented to accept such

a difference as that; and the Chief Engineer himself then sends a memorandum to the Minister for Works, dated the 16th September, 1885, to the following effect:—

"Referring to previous correspondence on the subject of the final settlement of Messrs. O'Rourke and McSharry's contract for the first section of the Brisbane Valley line, I have the honour to inform you that I have now received their statement of claims, amounting in all to £56,878.

"Were these claims of an ordinary character I should at once proceed to deal with them in accordance with the 40th clause of the conditions of contract, but many of them are of such an extraordinary and exorbitant nature that I think it highly improbable that they have been made with any intention on the part of the claimants of accepting such amount as I might award. Judging by Messrs. O'Rourke and McSharry's action in connection with my awards in the case of their Bundaberg contract, I think this supposition is most likely to be correct, and it would be mere waste of time on my part to enter upon the investigation of these claims. I have therefore to suggest, for the consideration of the Government, that in view of the nature of the claims and the fact that one of the items is based upon loss alleged to have been sustained through the action of the officers of the department, the matter should, with the consent of the contractors, be referred to a professional arbitrator outside the Government service."

Here is Mr. Stanley, the man who is accused of bias—of being prejudiced against these men—voluntarily inviting outside criticism of his decisions, voluntarily seeking it himself. The Minister, however, declined to accede to his request; and rightly, I consider, because the request does not come from the people who have the complaint to make. McSharry and O'Rourke, the contractors, were the aggrieved persons, and any suggestions for the appointment of an independent expert outside the Government should have come from them; and they do not appear to have asked for it. The Chief Engineer himself voluntarily asked for it, and I do not see how he could possibly have taken up a fairer position towards the contractors than the whole of this correspondence appears to show that he did. I want hon. members to bear in mind the dates when these claims were sent in. The claim for the second section of the Bundaberg Railway was sent in on the 19th December, 1884. I must refer here to a debate which took place in this House on the 8th December, 1884, in which the hon. member for Townsville (Mr. Macrossan) took upon himself to very harshly criticise the action of the Chief Engineer—that hon. member himself having recently had charge of that department, and having been able to see into all the workings of it, to see after the Chief Engineer and everybody else. The plans of the Brisbane Valley line, I may say, were prepared under his own supervision, and were signed by Mr. Thorneloe Smith—not by Mr. Stanley—on the 24th July, 1882. The contract was let in August, 1882, with Mr. Thorneloe Smith as Chief Engineer, the hon. member for Townsville as Minister for Works, and Mr. Stanley away in England. In his speech the hon. member said:—

"Owing to the hills coming down to the banks of the river a number of curves were necessary to get round those different points. Unfortunately that was one of the lines which he never went over to inspect himself. If he had gone over it he might have been able to show the engineer that many of those curves would not be necessary. The engineer might have found that out had he gone over it himself, but he (Hon. J. M. Macrossan) believed he had never gone over it, or visited it at all, but left the whole of the work to his subordinates."

In the first year Mr. Stanley could not very well have gone over the line, because he was away in England on sick-leave. But before the line was opened Mr. Stanley did inspect the work, and he found it in such a condition that he warned the contractors that if they did not make considerable improvements before the opening day he

would have to take the line out of their hands. With regard to that, the hon. member for Townsville said in his speech:—

"The line was taken out of the hands of the contractors within three weeks after the line was opened for traffic. It was taken out of their hands because it was in bad order—the maintenance was taken out of their hands first, and the line then taken out of their hands altogether. It was in bad order, there was no question about that; and it was not in good order now, though he believed it was in better order than when it was taken over."

He gives some credit, at all events, to Mr. Stanley. Then we come again to another charge which the member for Townsville makes in his speech:—

"Mr. Stanley took the ballast which Mr. Smith had rejected at a reduction of 15 per cent. upon the contract price; and he took the ballast which Mr. Smith had accepted at a reduction of 15 per cent., at a reduction of 7½ per cent. upon the contract price."

Now, I made it my duty to look into a good many other papers besides those which are now upon the table of the House referring to these railways. I looked up the papers in the department relating to this charge respecting the ballast, and I found that that statement is not borne out by the documentary evidence in the office which is available to members of this House who choose to look at it—the facts of the case being that Mr. Thorneloe Smith rejected the ballast first; it was afterwards referred to Mr. Stanley, who had then returned to the colony and resumed duty, and he confirmed Mr. Smith's rejection of the ballast and refused to pass and pay for it. Then the member for Port Curtis, Mr. Norton, who had not quite left office, again comes in useful. In defiance of both letters rejecting the condemned ballast he writes, on the 8th June, 1883, a peremptory order there and then through Commissioner for Railways, Mr. A. O. Herbert, directing him to pass and pay for the ballast, and he had to do it, of course. We have seen before how on the Central line, where the same contractors, McSharry and O'Rourke, sent in a claim for £3,118 18s. 2d., Mr. Ballard, who was afterwards proved in the Supreme Court to have been in their pay, could only reconcile his conscience to award £996. Yet the hon. member for Port Curtis with a scratch of his pen, at the eleventh hour of his Minister for Workship, gave them a cheque for £3,819 11s.—four times the amount.

The PREMIER: That is not in those papers.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL: No; but it was proved here before. In this case the ballast stands in exactly the same category. There was a lot of work shoved through at the eleventh hour, and this was one of the jobs perpetrated. I really think it is full time that the people of this colony had their eyes opened to the amount of mischief which may be perpetrated in the Works Office, either by incompetent or unscrupulous men.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Don't look at me; I had nothing to do with it.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL: I know that. Perhaps I had better look after you pretty closely. However, to return to this ballast. Mr. Macrossan, in his speech, goes on to say:—

"The ballast which had been accepted, and for which the contractor was therefore not any longer responsible, became mud."

His own testimony there bears out that of both Mr. Thorneloe Smith and Mr. Stanley. This, mind you, was when the salary of the Chief Engineer was under discussion; at the time when it is the privilege of every member in this House, and rightly so, to criticise the administration

and the condition of the departments generally, and to see that the people of the country get full value for their money. He goes on to say :—

“The disgraceful correspondence that had taken place in connection with the line, if laid before the hon. the Premier, would, he was quite certain, cause that hon. gentleman to make an inquiry into the conduct of the whole Railway Department, and if he did he would find that it was in a disorganised and demoralised state.”

Well, sir, I have looked through a great deal of the correspondence and I cannot see anything disgraceful at all in it, not, at all events, upon the part of the officers of the department. But, if such was the case, how was it that the hon. member for Townsville did not find it out a little sooner, when he was in power, and clear out the department? If it was in such a disgraceful state, why did he not reorganise it and set things going on a better footing? However, that is the severe criticism that the Chief Engineer received at the hands of the member for Townsville when that member for Townsville, as I am informed—I am sure he will correct me if I am wrong—was actually a partner in another colony with McSharry and O'Rourke in a railway contract. Was it in the interests, I should like to know, of anyone in this colony, or in the interest of railway contractors, that the member for Townsville should take upon himself to inflict this damaging speech upon the Chief Engineer? Members of this House can draw their own inferences. I have drawn mine, and it seems to me that there can be only one conclusion, and it is this: That this was just a rod put in pickle for Mr. Stanley, so that when further claims which were soon forthcoming—within ten days afterwards—were sent in, if they were not attended to and carefully considered, he would find his position as Chief Engineer pretty warm for him, more especially if certain people came back to the Works Office. Attention was called to these claims yesterday in what purports to be the leading organ of the colony with a view principally, I think, of throwing dust in the eyes of the people; and it made allusion to another claim in which a gentleman now a member of this House is interested, and compared the two cases. I refer to the way in which the hon. junior member for Maryborough (Mr. Annear) was dealt with by the Government. But the case is not a parallel one. That has been pointed out before in this House, and the leading organ knew it as well as anybody, but it declined to tell the whole truth, as usual, otherwise it would have stated that the claim made by Mr. Annear came before Mr. Thorneloe Smith when he was district engineer, and he found fault with some piece of work and disallowed it. Then when he sent in his claim Mr. Thorneloe Smith was Acting Chief Engineer, so that he was, as it were, appealing from Philip drunk to Philip sober, and had no chance of getting satisfaction because Mr. Thorneloe Smith could not possibly be expected to approve as Chief Engineer of what he had condemned in his capacity of district engineer. But why, I should like to know, do not these contractors, McSharry and O'Rourke, apply to the Minister for Works to appoint some independent expert outside the Government service to look into the merits of this case? If it is not in the power of the Government to deal with these claims and pay what is directly and lawfully due, I say they ought to be swept out of the office—cleared out; and I hope the Chief Secretary will consider it his duty to bring in a Bill to compel contractors to come to some kind of a settlement at all events within six months of the final award. Some steps should be taken to rectify this state of things. It is monstrous to think

that claims may be left in the office during the whole existence of a Ministry, and be dealt with by any persons or partners—unscrupulous or incompetent people—who may possibly occupy the Treasury benches in the next Parliament. I trust that we shall hear some solution of this difficulty, and that some finality is likely to be arrived at. I hope to hear from the Minister for Works or from the hon. the Premier. I beg to move the adjournment of the House.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. W. Miles) said: Mr. Speaker.—The hon. member for Cook, Mr. Lumley Hill, has requested me to make a statement in connection with the O'Rourke and McSharry claims, and he wants to know why the Government did not compel those gentlemen to accept the amount awarded by the Chief Engineer. I hope he will be satisfied with the answer I shall give him. I had no power to do so. The Government had no power whatever to compel them to sign the final certificate unless they chose. I have looked through these claims very carefully, and all the correspondence has come before me; but the claims of O'Rourke and McSharry were so much in excess of the awards of the Chief Engineer that it was utterly impossible for me to touch them. In their first claim of £38,351 3s. 11d. on the Bundaberg Railway, the award of Mr. Stanley was £3,439 8s. 11d., and I will ask any hon. member in this House if it was possible that I, not being a professional man, could deal with that claim? I do not choose to have the responsibility upon my shoulders that the hon. member who now leads the Opposition had when he was Minister for Works. He set the Chief Engineer at defiance and settled the claims himself. The Minister for Works has no power, in my opinion at all events, to settle them when they amount to £38,000, and only £3,000 has been awarded. I should be very sorry indeed to take the responsibility upon my shoulders of awarding that amount of money to the contractors upon a statement made by the Chief Engineer. The conditions of the contract throw the whole responsibility upon the Chief Engineer, as arbitrator between the Government and the contractor, and I shall take specially good care that I do not burden myself with anything that I am not compelled to. I have quite enough to do to discharge my duties as Minister for Works without taking upon my shoulders the responsibility of the Chief Engineer. Hon. members will see the amount of difficulty there is, putting it entirely out of my power to interfere. The same remarks apply to the Brisbane Valley extension. The claim of O'Rourke and McSharry in that case amounts to £56,878 4s. 8d., while the award of the Chief Engineer amounts to £802 14s. 6d. I ask hon. gentlemen how it is possible that I can arbitrate between the two? The thing is perfectly impossible, and I have no desire to enter into the various claims stated here. They are of such a character that it would be presumption on my part to attempt to settle them. Take item 69, for instance :—

“Loss owing to the maintenance, under the contract, not being allowed to commence to Fernvale on January 1, 1884, and to Lowood on February 12, same year—£3,255.”

And also claim No. 70, amounting to £5,000. They appear to be claims that cannot be entertained by any reasonable man. Again, they make a claim of something like £6,000 on account of the officers of the department interfering with the contractors. It is impossible for me to interfere, and, as the hon. member for Cook properly stated, O'Rourke and McSharry never applied to have their claim submitted to arbitration. The Chief Engineer submitted the matter to me, but I refused to take his suggestions. The contract for the Maryborough and Gympie

line was a different case altogether. I do not desire to say one word against Mr. Thorneloe Smith, as very likely he was correct; he might be so for anything I know. But there is this peculiar feature in the case, that Mr. Thorneloe Smith, as district engineer, condemned the works, but it so happened that when the settlement came about Mr. Thorneloe Smith was Acting Chief Engineer, and he, as arbitrator between the contractors and the Government, could not be otherwise than aware of the circumstances of the case. It was upon this ground that the contractor was fairly entitled to have his case submitted to a professional man to decide who was right and who was wrong. I believe in that case the contractor was awarded something like £5,000, and I believe, after looking over the papers, that that amount was justly awarded. I am in a position to say, Mr. Speaker, that in all the contracts entered into by the present Government up to the present time there has not been one single dispute.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL: Hear, hear!

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The Government are desirous that the contractors should be fairly dealt with, and they have introduced an arbitration clause into the conditions, wherein it provides that in the event of the certificate not being in accordance with the contractors' views they must intimate to the Government that they wish to appeal to arbitration within six weeks. If they do not appeal within that time their claim is set upon one side; but, as I said, up to the present there has not been one single dispute, and I am inclined to think that a great many of these claims made against the Railway Department are due chiefly to the hon. member for Townsville and the hon. member for Port Curtis. The hon. gentlemen took the opportunity last night to comment very strongly upon the way the Railway Department is conducted at present. It would be well for the country if that department had never been in the hands of either of those gentlemen. I can assure hon. members that so long as I reign there there will never be such claims as have been lately sent in. I am not in a position to comply with the request of the hon. member for Cook. I cannot compel the contractors to sign the certificate or to take the money. It is their business, and whether it is their object to let the claim stand until some favourable opportunity recalls their friends again I am sure I do not know. I think if it is possible to force a settlement of these claims it would be desirable to do it; but at the present time the Government have not power to do it. I do not think it would be advisable to bring in a Bill to compel them; but I hope, at all events, that the matter being ventilated in this way will be the means of inducing the contractors to come to some final settlement upon the subject.

Mr. W. BROOKES said: Mr. Speaker,—We have heard a very extraordinary statement this afternoon, a statement which I am very sorry it could have been possible for the hon. member for Cook to have made to the House. But extraordinary as it is, it will be followed by something more extraordinary if the hon. member for Port Curtis and the hon. member for Townsville allow it to pass without comment. I do not think there is any member in the House who is not waiting to hear what either or both of those hon. members have got to say about this matter.

Mr. NORTON: What about?

Mr. BROOKES: We are tolerably well acquainted with the facts now, and it appears to me that just in their dying Ministerial moments the late Government performed some very strange things or they did not perform them.

How is it possible to escape what the hon. member for Cook has said? I have a very strong impression that the Government did perform those things, and I have an impression, too, that if the same thing had been said about me I should have been pricked to reply in some fashion—I should either have admitted the charge or denied it, or wriggled out of it in some way or other. I should not have sat and treated it as if it was a very immaterial matter. It is a very important matter; and it appears to me that it does look, as the hon. member for Cook has said, as if these contractors are waiting until the turn of the tide—until there is a Minister for Works in office who will look favourably on these extraordinary claims. That is not a position—I do not wish to say anything rash or unkind, because the hon. member for Port Curtis and the hon. member for Townsville are gentlemen whom I respect in their private capacity—but that is not a position that should be occupied by gentlemen who have held the office of Minister for Works. I must say, and I do so with pain—I really and truly speak now with considerable difficulty and embarrassment and pain—that if they allow what has been said this afternoon to pass without some reply on their part, I cannot see how they can be set down as innocent before either the eyes of this House or the colony.

Mr. NORTON said: Mr. Speaker,—The only matter that I am aware of in which my name has been brought up is that with regard to the passing of some ballast. That is the only matter of which I have any knowledge that my name has been connected with. I passed that ballast. If the hon. member who has just spoken wishes to know why, I will tell him, but I will not tell the hon. member for Cook. Does the hon. member wish to know the reason?

Mr. W. BROOKES: We all wish to know it.

Mr. NORTON: I passed that ballast on the recommendation of Mr. Stanley. That is why I passed it.

The PREMIER: Why did he not pass it himself?

Mr. NORTON: During the time that Mr. Stanley was in England, Mr. Thorneloe Smith, who acted for him, condemned the ballast, and the matter remained as it was until Mr. Stanley returned from England. Shortly after he came back to the colony Mr. Stanley visited the line, and on his return to Brisbane he saw me in my office, and, speaking of the particular ballast that has been referred to, he said, "I do not see why Mr. Smith should have condemned one lot of ballast when he passed the other with a deduction of 15 per cent." I asked whether the condemned ballast was as good as the other which had been passed, and he replied, "My opinion is that the ballast which has been condemned is just as good as the ballast which has been passed." I said, "Mr. Stanley, do you wish me to understand that both lots of ballast ought to have been passed with the same deduction?" He answered, "Yes." I then said, "Will you make a recommendation to that effect?" He replied, "I do not like to make an official recommendation, for this reason: Mr. Thorneloe Smith has been acting for me in my absence, and I do not wish to make an official recommendation, because it would look as if I was interfering with work Mr. Smith had done." Hon. members no doubt are aware that the best feeling did not exist between the two engineers, and will understand why he gave that answer. I then said to him again, "Am I to understand that you think the ballast ought to have been passed with a deduction of 15 per cent.?" He replied,

"I certainly think so." And I said, "On your statement to that effect, without any official recommendation, I will give instructions for it to be passed." That is the only matter that has been referred to with which I had anything to do. I have not the slightest hesitation in saying that in any matter in which my name is brought up by any hon. member of this House except the one—I will not pay the slightest heed to what he says—but if any other hon. member wishes me to explain my action in any matter I will be most happy to do so. There is only one other matter to which I will advert, and that is the attempt of the Minister for Works to explain that there was a difference between Annear and Thorn's case and this one. There was a difference between them. I read the papers on Annear and Thorn's case, and in them I saw a letter from the Chief Engineer, Mr. Stanley, stating distinctly that before any claims were made the contractors had signed their final vouchers, that he as engineer had signed his final certificate, and that the money was paid before any protest was made. Does the hon. gentleman know that?

The PREMIER: It is not a fact.

Mr. NORTON: I do not know whether it is a fact or not. There is the letter from the Chief Engineer to that effect; that is all I know about it. If there was a protest made, of course, that fully excuses the Government. But I would like to ask the Minister for Works with regard to these claims of Messrs. O'Rourke and McSharry—I do not know whether there are any other cases like theirs—whether he is prepared, if they ask for arbitration, to agree to it? I do not blame the hon. gentleman for one moment for not undertaking to personally settle a claim like this. I think he would be most unwise to attempt to do so. But I do think that in all cases of that kind where there are large claims, and all very much larger than the engineer's report, the contractors are justified in asking for arbitration. That, I think, is the only fair way to deal with them.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said: Mr. Speaker,—I do not know why the hon. member for North Brisbane expects me to say anything upon this subject, though he said so.

Mr. W. BROOKES: Yes.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN: I have nothing to do with it whatever.

Mr. W. BROOKES: If so, why don't you sit down?

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN: If the hon. member had listened to what the hon. member for Cook said he would have had no reason to ask me anything on the subject. I have so little to do with it and take so little interest in it personally, that I have not even read the papers to which the hon. member for Cook has been referring.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL: You must have read them long ago.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN: I did not. With regard to the statement of the hon. member for Port Curtis, about Mr. Stanley and the signing of the final certificate under protest, I have a distinct recollection of that, because I remember Mr. Stanley was very much excited upon that subject. He was told when the final certificate was made out for Messrs. Annear and Thorn that they intended to make a protest. I remember that they signed it, and Mr. Stanley came to me in the office and told me that Mr. Annear had signed, and that Mr. Thorn had signed, and the only attempt at a protest was that after Mr. Thorn had actually signed, the pen down, and he standing up, he said, "Well, I sign this under protest."

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Mr. NORTON: He does not say that in his letter.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN: That is what Mr. Stanley told me. I know nothing of what he said in the letter, because I did not see it. Of course, if Messrs. Annear and Thorn did sign under protest, it is very different to the statement made by the Chief Engineer, and I think the Minister for Works should take some action—not that he should decide the case himself. Those claims are beyond the decision of any member of the House. They should be decided by experts, men able to judge both sides of the case. I listened to what the hon. member for Cook said, and it seemed to me that some of the claims he read were very extravagant. I have no hesitation in saying that. At the same time no one can give an honest opinion on these matters unless he has a thorough knowledge of the subject and inquires into each particular claim. I know I have had nothing to do with them beyond the fact that I made a speech on the subject here one day when the present Minister for Works was in office. I actually went to look at the ballast after that line was opened, and I said then, and I say now, that that ballast should never have been taken. It was nothing but hardened clay, what is called "indurated clay," and as soon as it is subjected to the weather it goes into clay. But I say that when the engineer undertook to take it at a reduction of so much per cent. the contractors were no longer responsible for it. The engineer, and not the contractors, then became responsible for it.

Mr. ANNEAR said: Mr. Speaker,—As my name has been mentioned, I would like to put the House, and especially the country, right concerning the signing of the final certificate mentioned, especially as our case has been misrepresented by the *Courier* ever since the case came before the Committee. The engineer had the certificate made out for an amount which he said was the final sum intended to be paid to Mr. Thorn and myself. Before we accepted that money a letter was written by our solicitor, Mr. Thynne. That letter I took to the Commissioner's office and I handed it in to Mr. Herbert's hands myself before we received the money. That letter pointed out that we received the sum under protest, and intended to make a further claim for the money due to us. Mr. Herbert took the letter, and some time after we accepted the sum of money. So far as I am concerned, I never signed a final certificate at that time nor up to the present.

Mr. HAMILTON said: Mr. Speaker,—I think it would be only fair for the Minister for Works to answer the question asked of him by the leader of the Opposition.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Directly.

Mr. HAMILTON: If he is going to answer it, it is all right. The question is whether the same justice should not be done to Messrs. O'Rourke and McSharry that has been done to one of his own supporters—that is, to appoint an arbitrator to decide the case. If an arbitrator is appointed I have no doubt his decision will be perfectly fair.

The PREMIER (Hon. Sir S. W. Griffith) said: Mr. Speaker,—The hon. member for Cook has called attention to the claims of Messrs. O'Rourke and McSharry with respect to the second section of the Bundaberg line, and the Brisbane Valley Branch Railway. The claims mentioned in this correspondence appear to be still in abeyance in some mysterious manner. I confess I do not understand why they have not taken the money or why they have not got it.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN: They could not get it.

The PREMIER: I do not know why. I have no hesitation in saying that when the Chief Engineer signs the certificate the contractors are entitled to get the money just as much as a servant of the Government is entitled to get his monthly pay.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN: It was refused.

The PREMIER: It ought not to have been refused. I have no hesitation in saying that. I have told my hon. colleague the Minister for Works, on more than one occasion, that as soon as the engineer signs the certificate the money is payable, and no other conditions can then be imposed. The Government are quite safe, because after another certificate is signed no action can be brought. When the engineer is satisfied that money is due it is his duty to sign the certificate and let the contractor get his money, and what follows after can be dealt with as it arises. If these men have not got the money it is their own fault. As to whether their claim should be reopened, that, of course, is a matter which should be considered with regard to the nature of the claims, and some of these before us no Government would be justified in referring to arbitration. Indeed, to treat them as serious at all would be preposterous. Nor do I think we ought to admit as a general rule that it is desirable that there should be an appeal from the Engineer-in-Chief. In special cases where what is complained of is the conduct of the Chief Engineer himself it is, of course, natural justice that there should be an appeal, as no man should be the judge of his own conduct. Where what is complained of is the arbitrary or unjust action of the Chief Engineer himself, there should be an appeal. That is my opinion, and in pursuance of these views the Government, in the case of the contract of Messrs. Annear and Co., appointed a chief engineer specially for that purpose. I believe the form of railway contracts now adopted is much better than the old one. I forget its exact terms, but I know it provides for an appeal from the Chief Engineer under certain circumstances; and I think that if an application were made under any of the old contracts still outstanding, where there is a *bond fide* claim or anything worthy the name of a claim—to have the benefit of a reference such as would be obtained had that condition formed part of the contract—it should receive favourable consideration. I do not mean for a moment to say that any attention should be paid to such a claim as that for “loss sustained by the district engineer divulging our prices to the men employed by us.” That is a thing to be laughed at.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN: That is a thing the engineer should not do.

The PREMIER: Then the contractors should bring an action against him. Any reasonable complaint would be likely to receive favourable consideration. But these claims ought certainly to be settled at once; they have no business to stand over so long; it is a scandal. I had not seen these papers before the hon. member read them, but I followed him as he was reading them, and it looks to me, as the hon. member says, as if the contractors were awaiting a more convenient opportunity to have the matter settled. If they have any money to get, let them come and get it. If they have any reasonable claim, let them apply to have it referred to arbitration.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL said: Mr. Speaker,—I perceive that it is with a considerable amount of reluctance that any sort of explanation is obtained from the two previous Ministers for

Works. The hon. member for Port Curtis (Mr. Norton) affected a contemptuous indifference to anything I had said; but I leave it to the House whether it was worth while bringing these claims forward. I am quite satisfied to accept the opinion of the House and the country whether it was not well that these glaring claims should be brought to light—these outrageous and monstrous claims—and that they should, if possible, be disposed of before there is any change in the constitution of this House. One good thing I am satisfied I have done; should the Opposition come into power again at any subsequent period, there are members among them who will look with caution and care to the manner in which these claims are dealt with, should they be brought forward for settlement then. There are many hon. gentlemen among them who will criticise the action of the individual, whoever he may be, who conducts the administration of the Works Department; they will be on their guard against claims of this nature coming from these men. I have warned them on that account; I have brought it forcibly before them. As to the explanation of the hon. member for Port Curtis with regard to the ballast and the interview he had with Mr. Stanley, all I can say is that it is not borne out by the written official records of the office. A few days before Mr. Norton gave orders through Mr. Herbert to pass and pay for the ballast, Mr. Stanley had written a full official memorandum to the Minister for Works of his objection, and the reasons for his objection to pass the ballast. That is in the correspondence, which any hon. member can look up and satisfy himself about. There is a good deal to investigate in that Works Office; but I do not wish to load the table of this House with papers, many of which hon. members, I daresay, would never read. The hon. member for Townsville affects indifference, and asserts that he never saw these papers since I called for them; possibly he had not the slightest necessity for seeing them. I can only infer that as they were papers affecting his partners—his acknowledged and admitted partners, as we have it on sworn evidence in a court of law—it is a fact not denied by himself that they were his partners over the border in New South Wales at this very time—it is highly probable that he knew all about their claims long before I asked for the papers. This House did not, and the general public did not. I should have liked the hon. member to have given us some explanation as to whose interest it was in that he went on that surveying expedition up the Brisbane Valley line, and delivered that celebrated speech of December the 8th. I should like to know whether it was in the interests of his partners over the border, whether it was in the interests of the people of the colony of Queensland, or whether it was in the interests of the Chief Engineer? But we must be content to put up with a very little explanation from him; it is delicate ground, I am aware. I am glad of the explanation that has fallen from the Minister for Works about the present state of contracts, and that there is now a clause introduced under which contractors may, within six weeks, appeal to arbitration. I consider that a very good step for the Minister to have taken. It would have been much better if the hon. member for Port Curtis, during his period of office, had introduced that clause into the conditions of contracts, instead of getting up in his place here the other day, when I ventured to criticise his action with regard to the grossly excessive demands made on the Central line, and reviling the conditions which he had never attempted to alter in any way. I am sorry to trespass so much on the time of the House, but I really thought that these

outrageous and preposterous schemes ought to be brought fully forth from their dark retreat, and exposed to the free criticism of the people of this country—the members of this House and the people who return representatives to this House. If the people are going to return the allies of men who send in claims of this nature, the money to satisfy which has to come out of the pockets of the taxpayers—if they are going to see themselves fleeced in this kind of way—all I can say is that I shall be very sorry for them. I beg to withdraw the motion.

ORDER OF BUSINESS.

Mr. ALAND said : Mr. Speaker,—Before you ask the permission of the House for the withdrawal of this motion, I wish to draw attention to the present arrangements. According to sessional order, the Government business will come on at 7 o'clock this evening. Now, I think the short experience we have had of this new sessional order has certainly proved that it is a very inconvenient one as far as private members are concerned. There have been one or two matters brought forward by private members, notably that motion of the hon. member for Maryborough, Mr. Annear. Now, I think if we had met as we have met hitherto, and had the whole of Thursday for our private business, that motion of the hon. member's would have been settled before this time. I do not know, looking at the business-paper before me, when that interesting motion will come on again ; but it appears to me that hon. members who know the forms of the House and the rules on which private business is conducted are stepping in and taking the place which I think the hon. member for Maryborough ought to occupy. If we were to go back to the old system of giving the whole of Thursday to private members, we should get through the business of private members a great deal better than we appear to be doing now. It will be no hardship to the Government, because there is no fear that if they wish to make a House on Friday, under our present arrangements, a House will be made. That I am quite sure of.

The PREMIER : Private members have the whole of Friday.

Mr. ALAND : I know they have, but there is a break in the business on Thursday, which is very undesirable. If hon. members expect a debate on private business to close in half an hour, an hour, or an hour and a-half, they will wait and have done with it. Now, as soon as 6 o'clock strikes on Thursday, nothing further can be done. I see the hon. member for South Brisbane has a motion on the paper on which he will want to speak two hours, which he certainly will not have a chance of doing this afternoon. When will that motion have a chance of being discussed in the House again ?

The PREMIER : On your proposition, perhaps in about six weeks.

Mr. ALAND : I am not proposing that the hon. member for South Brisbane should speak for two hours. We should, no doubt, all be glad to listen to him for two hours, but we do not want him to occupy so much time. I hope he will not take so long. I think hon. members should really take this matter into consideration. It does not interest me very much, because at present I have no private business to bring before the House, but it is a matter that hon. members should look into ; and if the Government do not see their way to alter it this session, they might next session go back to the old rule.

Mr. FOOTE said : Mr. Speaker,—I agree with the remarks of the hon. member for Toowoomba. I feel the inconvenience very much of a part of Thursday being made a Government

day ; it interferes with the business of private members. The instance referred to—the motion of the hon. member for Maryborough—is a very strong case in point. It is partly discussed, and we do not know when it will come on again. All we know is that it cannot come on to-night, and that other motions take precedence of it to-morrow. It may be weeks before we hear of it again, for all we know. These motions always increase towards the end of the session, when they are often put through in a very hurried manner. As the Government have made such rapid progress with the public business—more rapid than during any session that I have had the honour of a seat in the House—they might fairly substitute Thursday for Friday as private members' day for the remainder of the session. And if the Government should require Friday I am satisfied that hon. members will be glad to let them have it.

The PREMIER : The effect of that would be that instead of a day and a-half private members would only get a day.

Motion for adjournment, by leave, withdrawn.

MESSAGES FROM THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

PACIFIC ISLAND LABOURERS BILL.

The SPEAKER informed the House that he had received a message from the Legislative Council returning the Pacific Island Labourers Bill, and intimating that they did not insist on their amendment therein, and concurred in the amendment substituted instead thereof by the Legislative Assembly.

ELECTIONS TRIBUNAL BILL.

The SPEAKER also informed the House that he had received a message from the Legislative Council returning the Elections Tribunal Bill, with amendment, to which they requested the concurrence of the Legislative Assembly.

On the motion of the PREMIER, it was ordered that the Legislative Council's message be taken into consideration in committee to-morrow.

LAND-GRANT SYSTEM OF IMMIGRATION.

Mr. JORDAN, in moving—

That, in order to save a large part of the present immense cost of immigration, and to encourage the influx of capital and the settlement of the colony under the Land Act of 1884 by a farming class, it is expedient and desirable to bring in an Immigration Bill offering free grants of land, or a remission of rent, to persons paying their own full passage from Europe direct to Queensland, with proper safeguards against the abuse of the system—

said : Mr. Speaker,—It will be in the remembrance of many hon. members that last year I moved a resolution of which the one I have just read is an exact copy, which was carried without a division, and that the Premier signified his approval of the system therein provided. I wish it to be fairly understood : This is not the old land-order system of immigration ; that was defective and liable to abuse. What is here intended is a remission of rent, or of purchase money for land, in favour of persons paying their own full passages from Europe direct to the colony. The object of the system is, of course, to induce a large number of persons with capital to come out from the old country and settle upon the lands of the colony. The Premier admitted, on that occasion, that the importance of attracting agricultural settlers—not labourers, but farmers—to the colony was great. He said he had proposed a similar thing himself in 1882, but that since that he had hoped the Land Act of 1884 would prove so attractive and that it would of itself be sufficient to induce large numbers of

the class we want to settle in the colony, and that this hope had alone prevented its not having been included in that Act. He said:—

"When we framed that scheme we considered whether we should introduce a land-order system similar to the one I advocated in 1882. The question arose when the Government were framing the Bill, and also the question whether certain areas should be set apart for immigrants who might come out so that they might have an opportunity of settling together. These questions were very carefully considered, and the Government came to the conclusion at last that it was better not to include them in the Land Bill, for the reason that the inducements for settlement offered by the Bill were such that additional inducements would probably not be required."

That is the reason why it was not incorporated in the Land Act of 1884. The hon. gentleman further said that it was not practicable to introduce such a measure last session; that he held the same views in 1885 that he did in 1882, but that if in six or nine months from that time we had not a large immigration of farmers to the colony, then the time would have come when some such measure would be required. His words were:—

"I think, on the whole, that it is not practicable to deal with the subject, as the hon. gentleman desires, in the present session. Though I hold exactly the same views I hold three years ago on the importance of attracting farmers to the colony, I think it is desirable that we should wait at any rate until next session."

Four years, Mr. Speaker—from 1882 to 1886—is a long time in the history of a young colony like this, so vast in extent and so great in its resources. Unfortunately, the love of change in Australian communities is very great. Liberals of the stoutest political constitutions are apt to become sickly, faint in their minds, and dissatisfied, unless their leaders, whom they trust and admire, do something worthy of their professions of those principles of advancement and progress which have always distinguished what has been called the great Liberal party from the very conservative party of the colony, the old Conservatives—the old Conservative party as it existed many years ago, as it hardly exists now—certainly not represented by any party—and which I have always found in Queensland meant this: The vast public estate in the hands of a few gentlemen, mostly absentees, either in fact or in intention, with the smallest possible number of persons in the colony besides themselves, and those required to carry on commercial business, as long as they got an abundant supply of cheap labour at the public expense. That was old Toryism in Queensland. On the contrary, Mr. Speaker, the Liberal party, as you know, have from the very beginning advocated population—plenty of people, chiefly from Great Britain, a large proportion of them being persons of some means and some education, bringing out money with them—farmers and their families of the British yeoman class, men who were consumed with the passion for possessing land and cultivating it; the creators of all wealth, for all wealth, sir, comes out of the land—the men who make the earth, by the labour of their hands, to yield her increase in accordance with the designs of Providence. To till the ground is properly to possess it. To feed sheep and cattle over the wilderness is but one remove from the occupation of it by the poor aboriginals of Australia, who fed marsupials upon the land and kept it for their hunting-grounds. This one remove is, I admit, a great improvement upon kangaroos and savages, and we are greatly indebted, as I have said before, to those brave men who have gone out and possessed the vast wastes of this great continent. But after all, Mr. Speaker, I think we should always remember that pastoral occupation is but one step towards what is properly called

"settlement" in the Australian colonies, which, I understand, means population, agricultural progress, wealth, and British colonisation in its highest form. We were told the other day in the House that the first Governor of the colony, Sir George Bowen, said that with plenty of black labour we might realise wealth in Queensland beyond the dreams of avarice. Well, I always thought, and I have the best reasons to know, that our first Governor was greatly in advance of those gentlemen by whom he was advised during the four or five first years of his residence here. I know that Sir George Bowen did most heartily sympathise with middle-class immigration, and the success of our first land-order system, which introduced large numbers of persons to the colony who had been *bona fide* farmers in England and who brought a good deal of money out with them. I can say more, sir, that although his Government were opposed to that system, as a private gentleman he consistently gave it his countenance and support. I can understand that as time went on, and our first Governor being surrounded by what is called the old Tory party, who were his advisers, he more or less fell in with their views that we should try and establish cotton and sugar plantations in the North with Javanese labour, or Chinese, or coolies, or any black labour we could get. But, be that as it may, the creed of the Liberal party in Queensland has always been "Australia for the white man! no slavery!" nor anything bearing a likeness to that hideous thing;—"millions of people!"—not of negroes, coolies, Javanese, or Chinamen, but Englishmen, Irishmen, Scotchmen, and Germans—men, women, and children. I see, by the English news, that Sir George Bowen has recently been amusing his hearers—gentlemen who entertained him at home upon a special occasion—by that repeated funny story about sevenpence-halfpenny in the Queensland Treasury, and the thief who broke in and stole it away while the Treasurer slept. He is reported to have said that when he came to the colony in 1859 there was a population of only 25,000 persons, but now it has a population of 330,000. And this, sir, is boasted of to-day, when we have existed a quarter of a century, on board the good ship "Dacca" in the city of London, the President of the British Steamship Company in the chair, the first Governor of Queensland, the first President of the Legislative Council of Queensland, and a number of absentee colonists crowding the festive board! A good many childish things are often said and done in England for the delectation of absentee colonists, and no doubt to the great amusement of those noble lords and Royal Princes who sometimes condescend to entertain those people in their houses or to sit down with them at table; but I think this boasting on board the "Dacca" about the wonderful progress of the colony in a quarter of a century was about the silliest thing I ever heard of. And the infantile exhibition in the Queensland court was a fitting accompaniment, when a digger's cradle made of polished wood was rocked by a man dressed in thigh boots and the red shirt of an Australian digger. 330,000 people! Why, sir, if those gentlemen who advised Sir George Bowen during the first four or five years of his reign in this colony had not persistently prevented by every possible means in their power—fair and unfair—the successful operation of our first Land and Immigration Act, instead of 330,000 our population now would be 3,000,000 or more. That may sound strange and perhaps extravagant to some members, but I can prove it by the figures I have here. The population of the colony in 1860, as given in the vital statistics, was 28,000,

and the population three years afterwards was upwards of 61,000; so that it more than doubled itself. Now, if the population had more than doubled every three years since 1860, at the present time we should have had over 3,500,000 people in the colony to-day. Then we might have been glad, and, with some show of reason, have boasted about our wonderful progress in London in this year of the Indian and Colonial Exhibition. Then, instead of the mere handful of people we have now occupying this vast country, twelve times as large as England and Wales, we should have had as many people as there are in the whole of the Australian colonies; and instead of the 1,400 miles of railway which we have now, with an impending debt of £26,000,000, and other lines contracted for, and other lines projected which the Government are almost afraid to make in the present circumstances of the colony, we should have had the whole of these lines made and paid for, and bringing in an immense annual revenue to the exchequer. Instead of boasting, we ought to be ashamed of ourselves for being in such a backward condition as we are. This is the fruit of the Conservative rule which has generally obtained in this colony from the beginning. The creed of the Conservative party is very short and simple, easily learned and easily remembered. It is just this: "We have the land either in fee or in firm possession by lease, and we will keep it." And what have the great Liberal party been doing during twenty-five years? We acknowledge ourselves to blame, and more or less I am reflecting upon myself. We have opposed each other; we have been a house divided against itself, always ready to fall; generally out of power, sitting in the cold shades of opposition, the disappointed witnesses of the management for evil of this poor, oppressed, creeping, distracted, debt-besridden colony of Queensland. That is a faithful picture in my mind, and I have been twenty-six years now looking at these things; and what has taken place? Wealth we have, undeveloped, unmeasurable, in land, in timber, in coal, in gold, in iron, in tin, in copper, and in I know not what besides. But our land for the most part is a wilderness, leased to the mere pastoral occupant in the outside districts, including what is called "unavailable" country at three-fourths of a farthing per acre, or was so until the passing of the Act of 1884. Our mineral wealth is hidden in the bowels of the earth awaiting capital to develop it. There are rivers of water there too, but we are too poor to bring it to the surface. In a word, we have a land almost without inhabitants; 330,000 people in a country twelve times as large as England and Wales, where there are 24,000,000 of people. But now the Tories are out and the Liberals are in power. They have been in power for three years, and still we are of opinion that we ought to induce a very large settlement of farmers in the colony. To use the words of the Premier, this is the most important thing we have to do, but still we are in hopes that the Land Act of 1884 will do it; so we were in 1868. A good many hon. members will remember the flourish of trumpets with which that wonderful Bill was introduced into the Queensland Legislature, and the wonderful things which we were promised it would accomplish for the colony. A great number of the younger sons of the aristocracy, and a multitude of most desirable class of people would crowd into the colony when they knew that they could get 10,000 acres of land in one lump at only 5s. per acre, with ten years to pay it in. We know very well what was the bitter fruit of that fair tree of promise. Vast areas of the best lands of the colony, on the Darling Downs for instance, were

handed over to a few wealthy gentlemen for a mere song—5s. per acre, and ten years to pay it in; not to mention the quantities that were taken up unfairly. That is past and gone. This beautiful land on the Darling Downs is now locked up within wire fences, a desert and an eyesore in the midst of what ought to have been the garden of Queensland and the granary of Australia. So were our neighbours in New South Wales; they thought that their wonderful Act of 1860, permitting free selection before survey all over the colony, would attract hundreds of thousands of people from the old country—the farming class—who would come and settle upon the rich plains and fertile valleys of that great country of New South Wales. What did that result in? Millions of acres seized by blackmailers were bought in self-defence by the squatters, who ruined themselves, and now are handed over to the banks. But time flies. Three out of our five years' tenure of office have passed away. Last session the Premier spoke of the people who were to be attracted by the Act of 1884, and who were sure to come in large numbers when the Act became known. Where are they? They have simply gone over the water to the United States of America—a country which puts a prohibitory duty upon British manufactured goods, and they are lost to the Empire. Yearly, in great numbers, people go away, and its effect cannot be reckoned up in figures. In the meantime, what has become of the Immigration Bill, that it was too late to pass last session, and which, by implication, we were promised we should have this session if a great influx of farmers were not realised. I maintain, after all that has been said of the Land Act of 1884, that it has been a grand success in this most important particular: it unlocked the land. Four-fifths of the pastoral tenants have voluntarily come under the Act. That is a significant fact, and a fact of immeasurable importance. Believing that we were sincere, willing to accept fixity of tenure and compensation for improvements, expecting to get really a large settlement to create markets for their stock—they have given up one-half or one-third, or one-quarter of their runs for close settlement. Practically, remembering that the schedule may be extended to the whole colony, this means that at least 100,000,000 acres are given up by the pastoral tenant of the Crown for close settlement. But let us not forget that the 31st section of that Act provides that if the land is not wanted—"until it is needed," I think are the words—it may remain in the hands of the old lessees at one-third less rent than before. That is, that instead of paying about three-quarters of a farthing per acre in the outside districts, they should pay half-a-farthing per acre for it; so that everything depends upon whether there is a demand or not, which will make a great difference to the colony. I say, then, there are 100,000,000 acres open for selection, ready for settlement, or would be if the land was surveyed more quickly, which I think it ought to be; for as far as the pastoral tenants are concerned, it has been given up for that purpose. Suppose one-half of that area is suitable for pastoral occupation, which I will admit is very likely the case, then the 50,000,000 acres would settle 5,000 families, giving them an average of 10,000 acres each squattage. Suppose there were five members in each family, that would give 25,000 people; and allowing an equal number for servants and their children, that number would be doubled, so that the 50,000,000 acres would settle 50,000 people. Then there are the other 50,000,000 acres. I suppose they will include all the best lands, the scrub and alluvial lands, specially suited for farmers, where they can really make a good

living and where they will not break their hearts tilling bad land, as has happened in the past. I presume there can be no danger of the old iniquity of throwing open bad land for farming; that cannot take place again. Well, then, of these 50,000,000 acres a farm of 100 acres will be large enough for the class of people, the agricultural class of people, I want to see introduced, and I believe we all want to see introduced, into the colony. That area would therefore settle half-a-million families. If there were five persons in each family, that would give us 2,500,000, and if we allow half-a-million for servants—that class do not want many servants, as they do most of the work themselves with their own hands and the labour of their children—that means 3,000,000 of people. We know what a charm there is in a gift, especially in a gift of land. We know that draws every year about half-a-million of people across the Atlantic from the old countries of Europe to the great continent of America. We know that during the first six years of our independent existence as a colony that system drew from the opposite side of the world to this colony 30,000 people, besides the 6,000 who were not selected by your own agent—navvies and others. Those 30,000 people came in spite of bad land in the agricultural reserves and of vexatious regulations, opposed to the spirit, intention, and letter of the Act, issued every six months during the first three years to prevent this colony from being colonised. During the first year between 5,000 and 6,000 people paid their own full passages to the colony. During the first three years those who paid their own passages, according to this resolution of mine, brought with them an average of £30,000 in each ship, which gave £286 for each adult immigrant—full payers, besides the free and assisted. What is the interpretation of this? How was this? There was nothing extraordinary in the administration of the Act on the other side of the water. But there was on this side, for as I have said the Government of the day did what they could to prevent the law being administered in such a way as to encourage settlement. There was nothing extraordinary on the other side except hard work, and a strong, thorough belief in the colony and in the Act itself. One man, and he not a very able man, was pitted against two of the ablest and most eloquent men Australia has ever produced, Messrs. Parkes and Dalley. They laboured throughout the United Kingdom to induce people to emigrate to New South Wales. Pricked to energy by the success of our system, they did their very utmost, I believe, to introduce a great number of settlers from Great Britain to that great colony of New South Wales, by means of the wonderful charm, as it was then thought, of free selection before survey all over the colony. What did they accomplish? They did not send one single shipload, while our simple Queensland Land Act brought all those people I have mentioned. That was the talisman that was irresistible then, and it would be just as irresistible now. Gentlemen of the old Tory school,—I do not know whether there are any now; I think they are all dead; I see that there are some 10,000 absentees in the old country,—I hope all the gentlemen of that school are out of the colony. It passes the understanding of gentlemen of that way of thinking to conceive of the idea of the advent of wealth and greatness to the Australian colonies by means of the plough. They do not believe in farming at all. The thing is altogether insignificant. Their idea of prosperity is a plentiful rainfall, a high price for wool, plenty of labour for their own convenience and profit. They do not care to see a great number of small proprietary farmers tilling the dense scrubs and alluvial lands of the colony, gradually improving in

their circumstances and spreading themselves over the country. That is their abhorrence. In fact, it is foolishness in their eyes. They regard it with the supremest scorn and contempt. We cannot expect to see gentlemen of that school believing as we do. They are colour-blind; to see with our eyes is not in their blood. They cannot see any beauty in the landscape dotted with little farms, and waving with golden corn in the harvest. A great number of sheep feeding in the wilderness and followed by a shepherd and his dog they can appreciate and admire. They see no beauty in patches of potatoes, corn, and maize. As for cabbages, they have always told us for the last twenty-five years that they will not grow in the country. We cannot expect to effect any alteration in their views. But from a Liberal Government we expect liberal things, and things which are in harmony with the time-honoured traditions and deep-rooted convictions which have always been professed by the Liberal party—men who believe that the country will soon become a great, a powerful, a wealthy, and virtuous nation. Now, what we want, I think, speaking as a humble member of the House, is people and money. And we especially require a great agricultural interest, apart altogether from black labour. There is no agricultural industry in this colony worth mentioning except one which is often spoken of as *the* agricultural interest of Queensland, which is associated with that system of semi-slavery which has disgraced this colony in the eyes of the whole civilised world. I believe that what I have suggested just now is the remedy for the present state of things, the depression of trade, heavy taxation, crushing indebtedness, and men's hearts failing them with fear and distrust. I think, sir, that in the present emergency we might, without doing anything inconsistent with the principle of the Land Act of 1884, make some concession to the pastoral tenants; as, for instance, was suggested the other day in a leading article in the *Courier*—they sometimes write what is very sensible—we might appraise the rents, and then the maximum might be fixed for each successive period of five years. This is thrown out with considerable diffidence as a hint to the Government, and I think the hon. member for Rosewood gave the Government a good hint in the direction of some relief—because this is a time of emergency—to home-stead selectors in the way of relieving them of the immediate payment of survey fees that are a heavy burden to them. We have had the Land Bill, and we have now a Water Bill as the outcome of the prolific brain of Sir Samuel Griffith. I believe that Bill—the Water Bill—will be as good as the Land Bill. If it costs the colony five millions of money it does not matter so long as there are people enough. What is the good of our grand railway policy or of our magnificent land policy—as I say it is—by which we have re-leased 100,000,000 of acres of land for close settlement? What is the use of it all unless we have got the people? Unless we have the people, that 100,000,000 of acres will go back to the squatters, and they will get it at a less rent than they paid for it before. But, first and foremost, now at once, the land being released and things being ready, we want a thorough reform in our immigration system. I think the bounty immigrants should be carefully selected immigrants, and I may say I was astonished that that was not provided for in the Bill. With the experience I have had, I think that every immigrant we pay for should be of our own choosing. Every immigrant assisted should be carefully selected, and if the remittance emigrants cannot be selected under the present system, that system should be discontinued at once.

In my opinion, the free immigrants should be much more carefully selected than they have been. Our present system of all labourers is costing the colony, I see by the last figures on the subject, no less than £283,000, average per year, taking the last four years; and a great number of these immigrants, we know, go to the other colonies. I protest, as an individual member of this House, and in the name of the taxpayers of the colony, against this frightful extravagance. If we are to have economy, let us have it in our immigration. Let us have the best we can get, and at the least possible cost. Let at least one-third of them pay their own passages, and they will bring lots of money here, and they will be the very people to occupy these 100,000,000 acres of land which the Minister for Lands has provided. One-third of them would then be employers, and that will suit the working men. We know that Sir Thomas McIlwraith warned us that if we did not mind the working man would be up in arms about our immigration. So he will; but not if one-third of the immigrants are employers, and bring money with them. If that were done we should then have a different state of things. Money would flow into the colony, trade would revive and enterprise be stimulated, employment would be abundant, and we would get rid of our debt and of taxation. What is the good of spending £10,000,000 on railways when we have only got 300,000 people in a colony twelve times as large as England and Wales? What we want is people and money—the rapid and careful building up of a great agricultural interest without the possibility of servile labour. This is the simple solution of our difficulties. It is not an experiment. It has been tried, and it succeeded in spite of all difficulties. Now we have got a Minister for Lands who will help us, and who has shown he will help us by giving us the lands for the purpose; we have got a Minister for Works who believes in, and is in favour of, this system; our Premier approves of it, and our Attorney-General; and I say let us have it. I beg to move the motion standing in my name.

Question put.

The PREMIER moved the adjournment of the debate.

Question put and passed, and, on the motion of Mr. JORDAN, the resumption of the debate was made an Order of the Day for Thursday next.

IMMIGRATION ACT OF 1882 AMENDMENT BILL.

The PREMIER, in moving that leave be granted to introduce a Bill to amend the Immigration Act of 1882, said: Mr. Speaker,—The object of the Bill is simply this. The attention of the Government has been very strongly called lately to a matter which the hon. member for South Brisbane referred to this evening. That is the system of assisted immigration, over which at present the Government have no control whatever. Under that system, at the present time, the Government are bound to provide a passage for a nominee when the money is paid down; and it is found now that persons, say, in England or Ireland send money out to persons in Queensland, who nominate them, and then the Government are bound to provide passages for them. That is all this Bill proposes to deal with, and the sooner it is done the better. I shall therefore propose that the Bill be read a second time on Tuesday next, and considered in committee on the same day.

Question put and passed.

The Bill was brought in, read a first time, and the second reading made an Order of the Day for Tuesday next.

WAYS AND MEANS.

FINANCIAL STATEMENT—RESUMPTION OF COMMITTEE.

On the motion of the COLONIAL TREASURER (Hon. J. R. Dickson), the Speaker left the chair, and the House resolved itself into a Committee of the Whole, further to consider of Ways and Means for raising the Supply to be granted to Her Majesty.

Question—

That towards making good the Supply granted to Her Majesty it is desirable—

1st. That in lieu of the duties of Customs now levied upon articles on which such duties are levied in proportion to the value thereof, there shall be raised, levied, collected, and paid a duty at the rate of £7 10s. on every £100 of the value thereof.

2nd. That in lieu of the duties now levied under the provisions of the Stamp Duties Act of 1866 upon the granting of probates and letters of administration, there be raised, levied, collected, and paid in respect of the property, real and personal, of deceased persons which is transmitted, whether by will or upon intestacy, duties at the rates following, that is to say—

Where the total net value of the estate, after deducting all debts, does not exceed £100, no duty;

Where the value exceeds £100, and does not exceed £1,000, 2 per cent.;

Where the value exceeds £1,000, and does not exceed £10,000, 3 per cent.;

Where the value exceeds £10,000, and does not exceed £20,000, 4 per cent.;

And over the value of £20,000, 5 per cent.

Provided that, as to so much of the property as is transmitted to the widow or children of the deceased, the duty shall be calculated at one-half only of the percentage above mentioned.

On all settlements of property made by any person, and containing trusts of dispositions to take effect after his death, duties at the same rate as before provided.

On letters of administration granted after a grant during minority or absence, £5.

On probates granted pursuant to leave reserved, or limited or special letters of administration, £5.

On which it had been proposed, as an amendment, that the word “£100” be omitted from the second paragraph of the second resolution.

Question—That the words proposed to be omitted stand part of the question—put.

Mr. NELSON said: Mr. Fraser,—In resuming the debate on the Financial Statement, I shall endeavour, as far as possible, to avoid travelling over the ground that has already been gone over. We have already had a comparison, both from the hon. the Colonial Treasurer and from the leader of the Opposition, of the estimated receipts for last year and the actual receipts, and also of the estimated expenditure and the actual expenditure. I need not go over that again; I think both sides of the Committee are agreed as to the comparison. If anything, I think the leader of the Opposition put the case very mildly, and treated the Treasurer in a very generous spirit. The material point to be considered with regard to this comparison, I think, is this—that in nearly every department the Treasurer's estimated receipts have failed to come up to his anticipations. The Customs, which were estimated to return a largely increased revenue as compared with the previous year, fell short of that estimate by a considerable amount. That amount depends altogether on the estimate which is taken as to what the additional taxation we imposed last year ought to have produced. The Treasurer, in his Financial Statement last year, estimated that we would get £90,000. He forgot to take into consideration that this taxation would not extend over a whole year; he has taken credit for that, and the leader of the Opposition has also given him credit for it. The Treasurer last year told us that, if we agreed to the increased

taxation which he then proposed, he was going to convert the estimated deficit of £20,000 odd into a surplus of about £70,000 odd. It would, of course, require £90,000 to do that. The anticipations have not been realised. On the whole, there is a deficit of £187,000, and that is, I think, the main point to keep before us in considering this question. Then, with regard to expenditure; the actual expenditure was up to the full amount that was estimated, with the exception of £1,031. There is one comparison which has not yet been made, and which, I think, will be very useful; that is, to compare the expenditure during the year relatively to the amounts that were appropriated for the purposes defined. We know, of course, that the expenditure for the last year has not yet closed; but as the extra expenditure during the first three months of the year will balance the extra expenditure during the three months now going on, we may take it, as the Colonial Treasurer has assured us, that there is nothing exceptional or extra about the amounts at present, that the expenditure that was actually incurred last year is the estimate of what the expenditure of the year was likely to be. Taking it in this way, I find that we appropriated for the schedules last year £236,704; the actual expenditure during the year was £257,934; and we are asked to vote for the present year £257,433, or a decrease of £501. In Executive and Legislative the votes run very level. We voted last year under that head £25,850; there was actually spent £25,443, and we are asked to provide this year £25,423, being a decrease of £20 on the actual expenditure of last year. In the Colonial Secretary's Department there seems to be a little confusion in the figures between the Colonial Secretary and the Colonial Treasurer. The amount put down in the Estimates as voted last year is £456,818, but the actual amount appropriated for the year was £485,986, while the amount actually spent was £541,190. This year we are asked to provide £444,107, or the very large decrease of £97,083. The extra expenditure in that department, though not actually appropriated, was virtually appropriated, consisting of the compensation to planters, and other matters of that sort. At the same time there appears to have been an unauthorised expenditure in that department to a very large amount indeed. For the administration of justice we appropriated £32,497; we actually spent £32,644, and we are asked to vote this year £33,517, showing an increase of £673. For public instruction—and this is, I think, the most important item of the whole—we last year voted £201,766; we spent £210,564, and this year we are only asked to give £195,063, showing that we are going to dock this most important and vital department in the service to the extent of £15,501. This is one of the departments which we should all like to see, if anything, rather increasing than contracting. The Education Act is to a large extent automatic in its operation, and this would seem to show that the Government do not expect during the next twelve months any great demand throughout the country for new schools or any great spread of education. This is a very serious matter indeed. In the department of the Colonial Treasurer we are stated to have voted £175,938; what we really voted was £146,770.

THE COLONIAL TREASURER: The former sum includes "Colonial Stores."

MR. NELSON: The totals are correct. We spent £141,643, and we are asked this year to vote £169,887, or an increase on the actual expenditure of £27,744. In the Department of Public Lands we are also going backward. Last year we voted for that department £134,674, and the

Minister only spent £125,593. We are given to believe that that is owing to the diminution of surveys. If so, it is a very bad sign, for if surveys are not required it shows that the Land Act is not working in the manner we should like to see, and which we were led to expect. This year we are asked to vote for the Lands Department £107,254, or a decrease of £18,339. In Works and Mines the same thing is observable. We voted last year £119,984; we actually spent £112,723, and we are only asked this year for £68,903; showing economy, if it is economy, in that department to the extent of £43,825.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: It is economy.

MR. NELSON: We shall see whether it is or not, in the course of time. With railways, the difference is the other way. Last year we voted for railways £516,609; the actual expenditure was only £467,341; and this year we are asked to vote £548,221.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: That is owing to the extension of lines.

MR. NELSON: Showing an increase on the actual expenditure of last year of £80,880. I believe there is some humbug about this; because, if we gave him £516,609 last year, and he only spent £467,341, why should he require for the present year £548,000?

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: Extension of lines.

MR. NELSON: But there were extensions going on last year. That is the dodge, you see, Mr. Fraser. He asks for a great deal more than he really requires, and then he comes down at the end of the year and tries to make out that because he has not spent it all it is the result of economy. Last year we actually voted £516,609, and he only spent £467,347, and this year he asks for £548,221, showing an increase of over £80,000 upon what was spent last year. What he is going to do with it I do not know. I think there is something very suspicious about it. I do not like to see an estimate so exaggerated and swollen as this appears to be. Last year he either could not have calculated correctly what he required, or he deliberately asked for and got very much more than he really required.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: It is a good thing to have plenty of funds.

MR. NELSON: That is the point. He wants us to give him a big vote, and then if he finds that it will suit his purpose he will spend the money; you may depend upon that. The Postmaster-General is the only man who really appears to know how to make out an estimate, because he is the only one whose estimate of receipts has been realised. In fact he got something like £1,500 more than he put down as probable receipts. Every other department is on the wrong side—a long way on the wrong side. Last year the Postmaster-General was voted £319,977; he spent £304,237. This year he asks for £342,567, showing an increase upon last year's expenditure of £38,330. I expect that is for telegraphs. It is a very large amount compared with last year. The Auditor-General's is a very small department, and he asks for an increase of only £43 on the actual expenditure of last year. Referring again to railways, the department estimated their receipts for this year at £740,000. Last year the Minister gave a most exaggerated estimate of receipts, amounting to £778,000. They cannot say that we on this side of the House did not give them sufficient warning that that estimate would never be realised, and we have the satisfaction now of finding that facts have

carried out our warning, because the receipts of the department are £109,000, nearly £110,000 less than the estimate.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS : All owing to the drought.

Mr. NELSON : It may be ; perhaps it is not. However, there is one very observable fact that is well worthy of notice. Last year we had a net income from railways of £201,000, and putting the expenditure against the receipts this year the net income is estimated at only £191,000, showing that the Minister for Works, notwithstanding the extension of lines and the expenditure that is going on on railways, expects a less net revenue from railways this year than he got last by something like £10,000. Altogether on the whole expenditure there is an increase of £32,605, as compared with the actual expenditure last year ; so that after all, and notwithstanding the very fine sermon we have had from the Colonial Treasurer about economy, it appears—and this is a very important fact to be kept in mind—that we have got into such a state that it is impossible to reduce expenditure. The Treasurer will always tell us that the expenditure is expansive, and that the revenue is elastic. So it is, but it is something like a certain reciprocity that was all on one side—the contraction is all upon the revenue side and the expansion all upon the expenditure side ; because the Treasurer, after having done his very utmost to economise, yet tells us that he is obliged, in order to carry on the business of the country, to expend this year £32,605 more than he did last year. The hon. gentleman, in order to account for this immense deficiency in the railway receipts as compared with his sanguine anticipations of last year, told us that he based his calculations upon the comparative results of normal seasons. Well, it is a matter of opinion which I think nobody will have any difficulty in making up their mind about, whether last year the Treasurer was justified in basing his calculations upon any such comparative results, because the condition of the colony this time last year was the same as it had been for some time. The drought was not a new thing ; everything was in operation that had been in operation for some time ; and yet he tells us, to use his own words, that his anticipations were “based upon calculations of the comparative results of normal seasons.” I think the very fact of his using that expression tends to show that his calculations are of very little use. The only use of this comparison is simply to find out whether the Treasurer is a true prophet or not. If that is the basis upon which he made his calculations last year, when the colony was really in a most abnormal condition, there is no wonder that the results have turned out very different from his anticipations. The Minister for Works interjected just now that the drought was the cause of all these difficulties that we have got into. That I am very much inclined to dispute. That the drought has done something towards it, everybody will admit. But I say that if you look to the bottom of it you can see that the drought is not the sole cause or even a large cause. Moreover, there is this to be considered : There were some things in the colony which were quite as unprecedented as the drought, and one of those unprecedented things which happened, and which might have neutralised to a large extent the effects of the drought, was the very large expenditure of loan money. That is a matter that the Treasurer has taken very little note of, but which I consider one of the largest and most operating factors with regard to the finances of the colony. Has the Treasurer considered what it means ? He tells us that he has distributed throughout the colony an

amount of money equal to £6 per head. I think he is a little wrong there ; he is not quite just to himself, because that sum would take in the whole Loan Fund as if it was all spent in the colony, whereas we know that a large portion of it is spent in England, and very little actual cash comes here. However, just consider what that means. Supposing there are four persons in each family, then there would be foreign money brought here and spent amongst the population to the extent of £24 per family. Would that have no effect upon the trade of the colony ? What becomes of this money ? Does it not circulate throughout Queensland, taking it as a whole ? It is filtered first of all through contractors ; they pay their men wages, and the men buy the necessaries and comforts of life and other dutiable articles. In fact, the effect of it is this : that it inflates the trade of the colony, proportionate to the amount stated, and also, as we all know, it affects the revenue to that extent. This is a matter that has not been touched upon before, and I think it is one of the most important items that we can take into consideration. Is the revenue *bond fide*—the real revenue arising from the industry of the country, and its progress—or is it the revenue derived from this extra amount of money brought into the colony and distributed throughout it by the Treasurer ? I say this : that whatever effects the drought may have had, so far as the trade of the colony and consequently the revenue is concerned, this amount of loan money is quite sufficient, and more than sufficient, to neutralise all the prejudicial effects of the drought—to counterbalance them so far as they find expression in the Treasury Department—and if anyone will trace the figures I am sure he will come to the same conclusion that I have. There is one preliminary matter that I should like to touch upon, which is not a matter of very great importance, although the Treasurer seems to think it is, as he constantly refers to it. That is with regard to the floating of loans in London. He is always particularly anxious for us to understand that the floating of loans during his administration has never been impeded by any promise or restriction proposed or suggested by the investors at home. Now, I think that the investor at home has received a promise, and a very material promise—a promise which I consider the Government are bound in good faith to carry out. I will refer, in order to draw attention to it, to a circular which was written in the Treasury over a year ago, and which was sent to London, and was published in a great number of papers there and advertised throughout the whole United Kingdom. It is a statement in regard to the colony of Queensland, which we know from the Treasurer's correspondence was written in the Treasury in Brisbane and sent home to the Agent-General to publish as a financial document. But the Agent-General made one little alteration in it. He says :—

“You will notice that I slightly altered the statement sent to me from the colony, by inserting this clause—‘This Act provides for the estimated requirements of the colony (referring to the Loan Act) for the purposes mentioned for many years, and the Government now offer a first portion of £2,500,000 of stock.’”

Very well. In order to understand the full bearing of that hon. members must take into consideration what the circumstances were at the time. There was a considerable commotion in the money market, and Mr. Garrick when he received the correspondence was somewhat nervous. Business was quiet, and letters were being written in the papers, by nobody knows whom ; but the Treasurer supposed by political enemies, and very likely it was so. In order to

ally that commotion, Mr. Garrick inserted this clause into the statement, which was set before the public then, and the investors in England lent us the money. We must read that, of course, in the light in which it appears to a person in England, and we have the commentary upon it, which was contained in another letter published in the *Daily Telegraph*. It appeared that some writer had drawn attention to the fact that the population of Queensland did not want such a large loan to be put upon the market, and Mr. Garrick, in order to allay any feeling of uneasiness that this letter in the Press might cause, published an answer to it, of which I will read a part :—

“The error is transparent, and is well shown by our statistics. In 1860 the population was 28,000; on December 31st last it was 312,000. In the last five years it was increased by 93,841, of which increase 25,900 was during last year. This addition is mainly from immigration.”

The whole bearing of that is simply to show that we engaged to put our loan on the market according to the progress the colony made in population and otherwise. It simply means this: that the resources and population of the colony and the floating of the loan should proceed *pari passu*. That is what I have always contended for, and it is a thoroughly sound principle. And as in every other principle which the Treasurer has announced, or nearly every other, I agree with the hon. gentleman, so I do in regard to this; the thing with which I disagree is not his principles, but his practice, and the question is whether he is carrying out this arrangement with the English investor? At any rate, I hold that he should not be always bringing before us the statement, which I think is of doubtful accuracy, that we are not under any engagement whatever to the English investor. I am of opinion that we are under an equitable engagement to comply with the conditions stated by the Agent-General. The Treasurer says the credit of the colony has never stood higher than it does at the present time. That is true, and it is a fact that we ought all to be proud of, but we have always to look at the other side of the question. There are always two sides to a question, and it is the duty of the Opposition to look at the other side of things and see that we are not led astray by the sanguine anticipations of the Treasurer. Can the hon. gentleman give us any guarantee that this credit is going to continue? What is it founded upon? Is it founded upon any special virtue that this colony possesses or has ever shown? I do not think we can flatter ourselves to that extent. I think it is principally owing to the fact that there has been a superabundance of capital in London for a few years back looking for investment, and hardly able to find it—in point of fact, that the supply of money has been so much larger than the demand that it has become cheap. That is really the reason why our last loan was floated so successfully, and not because this colony was considered to be of specially good security. It was simply because money was plentiful, and there was hardly anyone to buy. There were more sellers than buyers, consequently the price of the article was reduced just as the price of any other article is reduced under similar circumstances. And, as far as the future is concerned, I am quite certain that neither the Treasurer nor anybody else will undertake to predict that this time next year—or even during the interval between now and this time next year—we can with certainty calculate on floating a loan at the same price as the last. In point of fact, the rate of interest and the rate of profits are among those things which the most skilful political economist, or practical banker,

or joint-stock broker, or any other of the fraternity cannot reckon with any degree of certainty six months ahead. So that if we indulge in the idea that we have only to go to London at any time to ask for money, and that we will get it at something under 4 per cent., we may find ourselves very much deceived. Capital is a thing so easily scared, and is liable to so many fluctuations, that no Treasurer, as I say, can, with any approach to definiteness, undertake to tell us what will be the rate of interest six months hence. I am sure the present Treasurer would not undertake that duty. I do not know whether I should refer to this much vexed balance arrangement, but I think I will give the hon. gentleman my ideas on the subject very shortly. The whole difficulty appears to me to lie in a nutshell, and to arise from a want of discrimination as to what surplus revenue is. Surplus revenue seems to me to be this: an amount of money taken from the earnings of the people and brought into the Treasury exceeding the requirements of that particular year; a certain something left over that was not really needed. The natural destination of that money would be to go back again to the people, seeing that we go on the principle that every year is to pay for itself; we try to avoid as much as possible mixing up one year with another. We endeavour to carry out the old English maxim “Pay your way,” and to make every year pay for itself; and when in some particular year we have an amount of surplus revenue, that ought to go back to the people in some shape or another. It would not do to carry it on to the next year's account, because that would only complicate matters. What we ought to do with surplus revenue, I think, is to afford some permanent relief to the taxpayer, which means converting surplus revenue into capital and devoting it to the purposes to which capital is usually applied—that is, to some permanent work of public utility.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL : Wipe out the debt.

Mr. NELSON : Wipe out the debt! I am going to refer to that directly. Being converted, then, into capital, surplus revenue is quite a different thing, quite a different substance I may say, from annual revenue, and the whole confusion that has arisen now is by the Treasurer trying to mix together these two heterogeneous things which will not assimilate. The thing is wrong in principle and it is wrong in practice. The Auditor-General condemns it, and every financier that I have ever heard of would condemn it. If the hon. gentleman wants an authority I will refer him to the highest authority to be found in the world. I think it will be generally admitted that the manner in which the accounts of the United Kingdom are kept, and the way the finances are carried on is unequalled in any other kingdom in the world. What do they do with surplus revenue there? Why, immediately surplus revenue accrues it is passed out of the Treasury—I think I am right in saying that it is passed out even before the end of the financial year, which is the 31st of March, and at the end of each quarter—into the hands of the Commissioners who have charge of the National Debt, and they forthwith devote it to the purchase and immediate cancellation of consols or some other Government paper, thereby giving substantial and permanent relief to the taxpayer. And that is what we do, or aim to do, only in a different way. We do not devote it to the reduction of our debt, because it seems to be the aim of the colony to make the debt as big as possible, but we devote it to works of public utility. As soon as ever it is devoted to that purpose it ceases to be revenue, and has no right to be dealt with by the Treasurer in any way. That is the old

style of thing, and though I can hardly expect the Treasurer, after taking such a strong stand as he has done in this respect, to revert to the old style, I am perfectly sure his successor will do so. We are very much troubled now with regard to this additional taxation. It is a very sore subject, and the Treasurer, I am afraid, treats it rather too lightly, because it is almost impossible for him to calculate what the effect of this extra taxation will be, both financially and politically. Taxation is really a very subtle and insidious matter to touch upon, and its effects are often very remote and difficult to discern. Now that the colony has taken a turn it seems to me a most inadvisable step to increase our taxation, particularly at the present time. The colony has been sick, and we are now convalescent, and if we treat a convalescent patient in this way we drag some of the strength out of him, and what is the consequence? The consequence may be that we may bring about a relapse, and no one can then tell what the ultimate consequence will be. That is at present the case with us. I do not think the people themselves really know the damage that occurs from the amount of taxation they are even now burdened with. This is one of those subjects also that it is not the interest of the Treasurer to enlighten them on. It is money taken out of their pockets to an extent that they are hardly any of them aware of, and which they would hardly believe if explained to them. This is a very difficult subject to illustrate, and I hardly know how to illustrate it, but I may attempt to do so something in this way: The Treasurer, in one of his tables, tells us that the amount of taxation per head in the colony is now something like £3 15s. 6d., and that it has been increasing for the last three years. Very well. What does that mean? Take a concrete case, without taking things altogether in the abstract. Take the case of an artisan, who is working for, say, 10s. a day, without going down to those getting much smaller wages. What, in this case, does this £3 15s. 6d. really mean?

Mr. BLACK: £3 16s. 7d.

Mr. NELSON: To be very accurate in this matter does not go for anything, because we shall find that this amount of £3 16s. 7d. is not correct, because it includes all our unfortunate friends at Dunwich, our still more unfortunate friends at St. Helena, as well as those in Woogaroo and other asylums, who are not affected so far as this taxation is concerned.

The PREMIER: Kanakas and Chinamen, too.

Mr. NELSON: Yes; Chinamen, too. Well, sir, I take it at £4, and what is the result? This hard-working artisan earning 10s. a day has to pay £4. That makes eight days he has got to work for the Treasurer for nothing. If that was all, it would be comparatively light. But take it that this is a decent man with a wife and five children, what has he got to pay then? He has to work another eight days for his wife, and yet another eight days for each of his children; that is fifty-six days in all he has to work for the Treasurer. But we find that that does not represent what this man has to pay. We have to look at the system of collecting these taxes. If the Treasurer or any other man went round to collect the money—the £28 this man has to pay—he probably would not get it, but the man has to pay the tax, and it is taken out of him without his knowing it. If that was all he had to pay, even it would be light, but he has to pay a good deal more than that, for the simple reason that the Treasurer will not go round and collect the tax. He takes another way of doing it by pressing into his service a sort of press-

gang. He uses all the merchants in Brisbane and in other parts of the colony, and not only makes them collect this money for him, but he makes them advance it, long before Peter Thompson—as we will call the artisan—has paid for or enjoyed the goods at all. The merchants have to pay it long before they collect it, and are they going to do all this for nothing? The merchant puts on more than he has to pay as duty to recoup him for the extra trouble, risk, and interest he is put to. And the worst of it is that all this is waste. I have seen calculations by eminent men—such as Professor Gerons and others—that this extra cost is nothing but mere waste. It does not go into the Treasury, and it does not enrich the merchant, because it only recoups him for his trouble and labour. It comes out of the working man's pocket, and there is no satisfaction in it at all. I have seen calculations made showing that this waste amounts to from 20 to 25 per cent. So that when we calculate the whole, the fact of the matter is that the man has to work for another week or a fortnight to satisfy the demands of the Treasurer. We are now proposing to put an additional tax upon him; we are going to give him another week or fortnight to work, for which he is to get no wages, as his wages have to go into the Treasury. Now, even that is not the worst of it. He is not only taxed for everything he consumes, but he is taxed for the only thing he has to sell, and that is his labour; because the effect of this taxation is to increase the price of the material for the production of articles in which the man's labour is an essential element. By restricting the use of those goods we also restrict the market for his labour; and that amounts to a very considerable item, although it is one that the working man himself hardly ever contemplates. If we want to do the working man the maximum of good, the way to do it is to make the materials upon which his labour is expended as open for use as possible—that is to say, make them as cheap as we can, and relieve them, if possible, of all taxation. For instance, if we want to give work to splitters and fencers up the country, and so increase the prosperity of the colony—because the whole wealth of a country is bred of labour, and if we can find abundance of work for every man to do, depend upon it the colony is in a thriving condition—if we want to give fencers and splitters employment, take the duty off wire. The mere fact of there being a duty on wire to the extent of about 20 per cent. of its value restricts its consumption, and restricts the employment of these men. The same thing applies to galvanised iron and a whole lot of other dutiable articles. Besides that, there is another man who is thrown out of employment by the enormous taxation—a man whom we are all very much interested in—the Commissioner for Railways. If we were to make these goods cheap so that people could use them in abundance, look at the immense amount of extra traffic there would be on the railways. We all want to see the Land Act work well; we want to see people take up land and improve it, and yet we put every possible restriction upon them. Everything they require for their improvements is taxed—their tools, their iron wire, everything you can think of, from the cradle to the coffin.

The PREMIER: There is no tax on the coffin.

Mr. NELSON: Another objection I have to specific taxes is this: I always consider that profits form the proper basis of taxation, and I think most people admit that; but we do not tax profits here, we tax the men. Suppose a man gets a machine, it may be a year or two before he gets any profit, but he has to pay the

duty before he commences. He has all the risk, and it makes him cautious. You discourage enterprise and repress the spirit of improvement, and the consequence is that in the end you restrict the employment of labour. Now, these *ad valorem* duties, I think, are the most abominable and scandalous duties ever invented. They are wasteful in an extreme degree—the Treasury does not get anything like what the duties cost the consumer; the proportion of revenue derived by the State is very small compared with what comes out of our pockets. It is a barbarous kind of duty altogether. I do not think in England that a man who suggested the mere name of *ad valorem* duties would be allowed to stop in the community; all parties in politics have condemned them years ago. There is another very strong objection to them at the present time. It is a general rule, which all experience has proved, that if you put a tax upon a commodity the consumption of which is on the decline, you simply accelerate that decline. Now, what is the case with these *ad valorem* duties? The Treasurer tells us they produced last year, with the extra taxation, something like £140,000—that is all. There was an increase of somewhere about £9,500; but that was not a natural increase; it was not a growth of the revenue, but was almost solely due to the new taxation upon machinery. The revenue, therefore, produced by these *ad valorem* duties was not progressing as the colony was progressing, but was absolutely stationary, showing that the consumption of the commodities that come under that class was on the decline. I say, then, that to put a tax on those very commodities the consumption of which is now on the decline is contrary to all the dictates of experience. You will not derive any revenue from it, and you will inflict a very serious injury on the community. The Treasurer also said with regard to this taxation that it falls very evenly throughout the community. That I utterly deny—I am quite certain there is a great mistake in that respect. Just compare the man I was taking before with a rich man—the one getting £150 a year, the other £15,000 a year—100 to 1. Will the man with £15,000 a year drink 100 times more whisky? Will he consume 100 times more tea, or buy 100 times more of the goods which pay *ad valorem* duty? The thing is preposterous. As a matter of fact, the duties fall with the most grievous inequality upon the people of small income. I am not talking of working men in particular. It does not matter whether he is a clerk or a Government officer, or what he may be, the tax falls heaviest upon men with small incomes as compared with those whose incomes are large. Take one of the commonest articles of consumption—tea.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: That does not come under the *ad valorem* duties.

Mr. NELSON: Let us look at the list and see what does. We first come to acids of all sorts; that will affect many industries. Then we have agricultural implements; they are to be taxed 50 per cent. more than they are taxed now.

Mr. FOOTE: It will take you till daylight to go through the list.

Mr. NELSON: I will only pick out a few of the largest items. There is the item of apparel and slops; will the rich man, relatively speaking, buy more of them than the poor man?

Mr. ALAND: He will buy a better class of article.

Mr. NELSON: Still the difference between the two will be very slight. Then we have dynamite: that will affect the mining industry. I see that blasting powder and sporting powder

pay the same rate; that is not fair. Then we have an *ad valorem* duty on all kinds of sacks—corn-sacks, wool-sacks, sugar-sacks. Another very large item is blankets; will the rich man use more blankets than the poor man?

Mr. ALAND: He will buy them of a better quality.

Mr. NELSON: But compared with his income that will be a mere bagatelle. All taxes of this kind fall heaviest on men with small incomes, as everybody must admit. In England, I would remind the Colonial Treasurer, in order to equalise taxation and reach all classes of the community, they have that mighty engine of finance of which he is very envious, the income-tax. But the income-tax there does not fall upon men of small incomes. Any man with an income of less than £150 is exempt from it; and even up to £400 a man is only charged the tax upon, I think, £280. I recollect, before coming to the colony—although I was then of an age when taxation did not bother me much—I recollect Dr. Lang, one of the greatest emigration agents who ever left the old country, putting it forth as one of his greatest inducements to people to come to this colony, that they would get rid of the enormous taxation of the old country.

Mr. ALAND: He must have been alluding to church rates and poor rates.

Mr. NELSON: At that time the English tariff was an extremely cumbrous one, embracing somewhere about 1,100 articles. But while they have been gradually getting rid of the tariff, we, who started twenty odd years ago with a very small and liberal tariff, are going the other way. The only articles really taxed in England now are spirits of all sorts, tobacco, and tea; the others are matters of excise; whereas we tax everything a man can possibly use. While they have been reducing the burthens on the taxpayer, we have been imposing heavier ones. What is the difference now between a man at home and a man here? The taxation in England does not amount to £2 per head of population; and if a man chooses to abstain from grog, tobacco, and tea, he can enjoy all the benefits of living in the most highly civilised country in the world, and be free from taxation altogether. Even if he only abstained from grog and tobacco—and he would not forfeit the esteem of his fellow-citizens if he did so from principle—the only article on which he would have to pay any duty would be tea; and that is just the same as we pay here now—6d. per pound.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: Such is the reward of virtue.

Mr. NELSON: When it becomes known that we are piling on the taxes year after year, will it not have some effect upon our immigration? I rather think it will affect it most seriously. People will begin to ask whether this is a country that they can live in or not. When they find that one-fourth of their wages is taken out of their pockets and put into the Treasury—in other words, that the purchasing power of their wages is reduced by about 25 per cent.—they will begin to consider whether they are not better off at home on 6s. a day than they would be here on 10s. a day, and probably they will object to come. But the subject is pretty well exhausted. I will now take the opportunity of remonstrating very strongly with the Chief Secretary and the Colonial Treasurer with respect to the loose and lax way in which they talk about a probable land-tax. They must be blind to the consequences of that way of talking about it. It would be infinitely better for the country if they would put on the tax at once, and be done with it. Nobody is frightened of a

land-tax that I am aware of. But if talked of as something which may be looked forward to, it can only result in a feeling of uncertainty, doubt, and distrust.

The PREMIER: You are getting educated up to it.

Mr. NELSON: We do not require to be educated up to it. Put it on and be done with it, but do not talk and threaten before you put it on. If you do the consequence will be, as I have just said, a feeling of distrust and uncertainty throughout the country, the contraction of some important industries, and the turning of a number of men out of employment. It can have no other result. With regard to the land-tax, it looks as if the Government were aware that they are beginning to get into a moribund condition, and are therefore getting ready one of their old cries for a general election—one of those political dodges that create excitement amongst the multitude, and which the Government make use of to prey upon their prejudices and their ignorances. If they have any intention to put this tax upon land, they should come down with it now when the revenue requires it. With respect to the tax itself, they may suppose that I am interested in it; but I shall not object to it at any time that it is put on. It will not hurt the landowner. That is where the mistaken notion gets spread amongst the people; they think that the incidence of taxation coincides with the direct method in which it is raised. That is the greatest mistake that ever was made. Suppose they tax me £100, that will not affect me very much. It simply means reducing the labour I employ by about two men. It is not as if landowners were bound to employ a certain number of men, or simply hoarded up their money. Nothing of the sort. All the profits made out of land in every place that I know of are immediately spent upon the land. The owners employ labour, and establish and maintain trade by the purchase of commodities required for improvements. If a land-tax is put on, it will have, as I have said, a disturbing effect, because it will tend to the restriction of trade. It can have no other result, and it is only when we cannot possibly do without revenue that we are justified in putting on taxes at all. I consider, sir, that to secure a market for our labour ought to be by far the greatest aim of the Government. For these reasons, I do not think that the *ad valorem* duties will produce the revenue which the Colonial Treasurer anticipates, because they are put upon commodities the consumption of which depends upon the men of small incomes. It seems a very simple thing to say we had £140,000 revenue last year, and if we increase the duties by 50 per cent. we shall get 50 per cent. more revenue, but anyone who looks into the subject carefully will find that there is very great uncertainty about that. One of the best illustrative instances of that which you can find occurred in the time of Pitt, when they thought that by putting an increase of 5 per cent. upon the whole of the tariff they would increase the revenue by 5 per cent., but what was the result? That they only increased the revenue by $\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. one-tenth of what they expected. I will refer, now, to the balances of the colony as presented to us by the Treasurer, make one or two remarks on the subject, and then close. I took the trouble the other day to run through the balance for my own information with a view of divesting it of its official aspect, and of reducing it to a more homely style, and I can assure you that I was rather surprised at the result. If hon. members who are interested in the subject will refer to the first page of the

Estimates I will give them the result of my small calculations. The first subject treated is taxation, and I shall take Customs, excise, and licenses together, because they all fall on the consumer. It is a great mistake to suppose that because a licensed victualler pays £30 a year for a license the money comes out of his pocket. He only advances the £30, and collects it again from his customers. It is really the customers—the consumers who pay the taxes, all the licenses, and everything else connected with taxation. The taxation is said to be £1,300,000, and a rough analysis of that I make out to be this: The people who indulge in alcoholic liquors contribute £520,000; consumers of tobacco and opium, about £160,000; consumers of tea and substitutes, about £80,000. Then we are taxed for food and necessities about £250,000, and for materials of trade about £160,000. The taxation through the Customs, excise, and licenses will therefore amount to £1,170,000; the cost of collecting that through the Customs, border duties, and distilleries, will amount to £51,787; a very moderate sum, I consider, looking at the size of the colony, and the distance between ports. That will give us a net revenue from Customs, excise, and licenses of £1,118,213. Now, the question occurs to me how much of that is real *bona fide* revenue—that is, not casual or incidental revenue, but revenue that you can depend upon; that is really going to come out of the enterprise of the people of the colony? I daresay hon. members will be considerably surprised when I tell them only one-half of it is really *bona fide* dependable revenue. The other half of it consists of revenue derived partly from the inflation of trade by the distribution of loan money—anyone can readily understand that by the distribution of loan money throughout the colony you inflate trade to a large extent, and consequently inflate the revenue. The other part is simply the reimbursements or refundments to the revenue from people who are in the employment of the Government. They get the whole of their income out of the Treasury, and pay back a small part of that, amounting, as the Treasurer said, to about £4 per head. The real *bona fide* revenue of the colony derived from taxation will amount to nothing more than £559,106; that is from Customs and excise. But we will look at the amounts that are derived from Civil servants, which include the Education Department and the Railway Department, and all the people who are living upon the Government money, and putting that on, because it would be very inconvenient to take it from the other side, we shall see that the net Customs and excise, deducting only one-fifth, for the abnormal inflation of trade caused by the distribution of loan money, £233,643, which I consider is not *bona fide* revenue at all, but revenue that we would not get unless we had this large expenditure of loan money going on, amounts to £39,570. I have left out stamps, for the purpose of calling attention to that separately. We are to get £130,000 from stamps, and what is the cost of collecting that? Only £625, and I think the Treasurer is right in trying to get some further revenue from stamps, because the cost of collecting seems to be so very small. The whole establishment, although it produces this very fair revenue of £130,000, seems to be managed by one man and a boy, and gives a net revenue of £129,375. The revenue supposed to be derived from land is £585,500. That looks fair; but how much revenue is there there? How much *bona fide* dependable revenue? In the first place, with regard to the items "Auction," "Selection," "Pre-emption," "Homestead," and "Conditional Purchase," I take the liberty of striking them out of the revenue altogether. They have no business to be there. The professions we

have had from Ministers are excellent. We are told how bad it is to use our capital as revenue, and that there was something criminal in so doing. And yet what do we find here? We find that a sum of money not less than £235,000 is included in this revenue return, which no man would dare to say was revenue at all. It is not revenue. Selling land is not revenue, and it has no right to be included as such. We will therefore strike it out. Then with regard to the cost of working the Lands Department, there is a secretary and a Land Board; that costs £3,000. The department costs £99,268, which reduces the apparent revenue from land to a very much smaller amount than one would think. Then there are some other items that might fairly be charged against the land. Take the items, for instance, "Grants in aid of municipalities and divisional boards." They might be fairly charged against the land, upon the principle that it does not seem fair that we should take out of the ordinary taxpayer's pocket his earnings, when he has no real property at all, and never intends to have any, and devote them to endowing people who have land, for the purpose of improving those lands. I think it is only a fair thing to put that against the land revenue, seeing that it comes out of the land originally and is afterwards spent upon the land in the shape of improvements. If we do that, we find grants to municipalities and divisional boards amounting to £195,000. There is also the marsupial tax to be charged against the land, because on no other principle can we give that grant except to improve the public estate, and it is only fair that we should devote the money derived from land to the improvement of land. The whole deduction then from the land revenue will amount to £309,268, taking all these items out, and that leaves us a net revenue from the land of only £41,232, which is miserably small compared to what most people would imagine. But if we go on to public works the result is still more disastrous.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: You have gone over that three or four times.

Mr. NELSON: I am going to expose the Minister for Works. The public works are supposed to return us £957,000—that is the Treasurer's estimate. But what have we got against that? We have got the Minister for Works and the Postmaster-General; and the Department for Works requires £63,953, and the Railway Department requires £548,221. Then the Post and Telegraph Department requires £341,729; and the Harbours and Pilots require £58,349, leaving the expenditure on account of public works and services amounting to £1,014,252, against a receipt of £957,000, showing a loss.

Mr. ALAND: The Post Office takes up most of that loss.

Mr. NELSON: I am taking the amounts in the aggregate. They are all put down in the one schedule, and that is the result. Even with the swollen estimate of receipts the Treasurer has given us, we are going to sustain a loss altogether independent of the interest upon the money of £57,252. Here we have been spending £20,000,000 in trying to improve this colony by initiating what the Treasurer repeatedly tells us are reproductive works. But how much are they reproducing? How much have they returned after all the expenditure is gone through? We find that they do not even pay their own way, and we have to call upon the general taxpayer to contribute the sum of £57,252 just to keep them going. There is another item called "Miscellaneous Services," but as that produces no revenue we will strike it out. Now, I will analyse the

expenditure. First of all I will refer to the interest on the public debt, which has been put down in a corner as if it had been almost forgotten by the Treasurer. I take this first, not for the sake of contrariety, but because it really ought to come first as it is a first charge on the revenue. Anyone looking at the Loan Bills will find that the investor has a primary right to be paid from the consolidated revenue. I do not know whether that conflicts with the Constitution Act—whether Ministers might not pay the Governor and themselves first; but, at any rate, this is a first charge upon the revenue, and it amounts to £871,565. But that is not all. The people in Brisbane were ambitious to get a bridge once; there was some muddle over it, and we have now to pay the interest on the cost of that bridge to the extent of £6,063 a year. That is a pretty heavy rent to pay for a bridge. It is not very clear to my mind why the people throughout the whole of the colony should be called upon to pay that large sum in order that there should be a free bridge in Brisbane. That brings the total debt charge up to £877,628. It is, however, not quite so bad as that, because the Treasurer has a lot of money lent out to local authorities for which he receives interest. I will put down the amount of that interest at £40,000. He also gets some interest from the banks for money placed at fixed deposit, which I will put down at £60,000. That makes a reduction from the total debt charge of £100,000, so that we pay annually in the shape of interest £770,628. If we add to that the sum of £57,000 which we contribute towards public works in order to keep them going, we have a sum of £800,000 which has to be paid by the colony every year. How are we to pay it? By taxation is one method. But we might by adopting a bad system of taxation injure certain classes of the community very much; in fact, we might ruin them by bad legislation in that respect. What do we find to be the present condition of the colony? We are getting nothing from our public works, but have actually to pay £57,000 a year to keep them going, and we have also to send out of the colony an enormous sum of money to pay the interest on our public debt, for it all goes out of the colony with the exception of a comparatively small amount to pay the interest on a few debentures held by the Savings Bank and the Australian Mutual Provident Society. All this goes out of the country every year. There are £800,000 worth of exports for which there are no corresponding imports; a sum of money which might be used in the employment of labour in many respects, and which would make wages and produce higher. This is going out of the colony year by year. Just consider what it means in the shape of labour. Suppose the net earnings of a man are £50 a year; that means that 16,000 men can be employed for that sum of £800,000 from the 1st January to the 30th December. But instead of that the whole of those earnings go to enrich, not the colony, but the money-lender in England. Supposing that there were four persons to each family, then that would represent 64,000 head of population in Queensland. It seems to me that if no change is introduced in this system we are likely to get into a very bad way—I am afraid we are in it now. I think the prospect is very gloomy indeed—gloomy in the extreme. There is no probable growth of receipts which will overtake the increase of expenditure. It is not a matter of choice, but a matter of necessity. We cannot escape a bad condition of things unless some change is made in the present policy. The revenue is a thing that is not quite certain; it may or may not increase. The expenditure is increasing every year, and the enormous charge of interest is also increasing. How are these to

be met? That is what I wish to know. I will show how we got into our present condition. It was by the enormously extravagant and lavish way in which the loan money has been spent. That is what has produced the state of financial exhaustion with which we are now encumbered. It is the Loan Fund, and the enormous charges for that Loan Fund, which have produced all the evils from which we are now suffering. Because this capital, instead of being distributed all over the colony—instead of being spent in the way that it would become reproductive, as has been promised from year to year—has been laid out in such a manner that we cannot say now that the promised results are even in process of achievement. Look at the railway returns, and it will be seen that year by year they are growing less and less; the receipts are rising, it is true, but the net revenue is getting "small by degrees and beautifully less." This is a most serious matter, and hon. members will find that what I state is correct by referring to the report of the Commissioner for Railways. Look at the Sandgate Railway. Take that as an example. That is a railway that, if any railway in the colony pays, ought to pay, because it has a large passenger traffic, and that is the best paying of all kinds of traffic. What do we find with regard to the Sandgate Railway? We find that, although the traffic is increasing fairly, the net revenue is going backward. And how do we account for it? By this expenditure of capital upon it. That is the reason the Commissioner himself gives. The Minister for Works has only got to carry that railway on to Shorncliffe, as he promised last night, and then postpone for a century all chance of our getting any revenue from it. The thing seems to me perfectly clear. What do we keep a Commissioner for Railways for but to tell us the truth? and that is what he has told us. We do not give the Commissioner for Railways a chance. He is particularly anxious to show good returns, and that our railways are likely to produce profits; but he complains himself that there is such an expenditure of extra capital, and consequent upon that additional interest to be provided for, that the day when they are going to become reproductive is getting postponed more and more. Look at the expenditure going on on the railway to Warwick. Look at the expenditure at Toowoomba alone. It must be about £40,000 at least, and a lot of it we never got value for, and never will, and what have we got for it? You enter a train to go to Toowoomba, and you arrive there, and go round a bridge thing which is likely to set you on a longer voyage. You go further along the line and wait for a time, when if the driver of the pilot-engine does not happen to be very busy he comes along and hooks on to you behind, and in a very *infra dig.* manner you are taken into the town stern-foremost and discharged. That is the result of goodness knows how much expenditure, but it is something like £40,000, and it is not safe to go in there now. What it will be like when the Minister for Works spends another £40,000 upon it I do not know, but I think the next Minister for Works will abolish the thing altogether and put up a station at the forked line, so that the train can come into and go out of the station without any pilot-engine, and that will save a very considerable time in the journey to and beyond Toowoomba. I am now going to refer to what seems to me a very lax sense of responsibility that seems to hang upon the department with regard to the expenditure of this capital loan money. I have had my grave misgivings that there is a lot of this money not spent as it ought to be upon "capital" work, but upon work that would more properly come

under the designation of "maintenance" or "repairs." That is a great mystery to me. You can see it in a great many things. As I mentioned before, the Commissioner for Railways' Report is now altered in such a way that nobody can follow it, but there is still enough left, if one looks for it, to arouse suspicion. For instance, there is an item like this, "Railing the Main Range," at a cost of a great many thousand pounds.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: That was a long time ago.

Mr. NELSON: It has been going on for years, and it is in last year's report. Then there is another item, "Extra sleepers for railway between Dalby and Warwick." All charged; Loan Account.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: No.

Mr. NELSON: Very well, we will verify it as it is a very important subject, and the system is one which, if not altered, will only lead to ruin and disgrace. At page 27 of the Commissioner for Railways' Report I see the item "Extra sleepers between Dalby and Warwick, £1,091 8s. 2d." There was £25,000 paid on the standing line last year. Then there are items like this in the report: "Cutting down trees overhanging line," charged to Loan Account. Then I find the item "Railing the Main Range, £17,657 13s. 2d."

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: That was your colleague.

Mr. NELSON: I have not got a colleague, and never had one. Can anyone explain that item to me? The consequence is that we have two items going on opposite tacks. The expenditure of loan money has certainly a good effect in distributing in the colony an amount of £6 per head, but it is very ephemeral in its effect; but the debt charge is permanent, and goes on for ever. These two have now got to such a state that one is likely to choke off the other altogether, and we shall not be able to borrow at all by-and-by. What is the limit to our borrowing powers?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: It cannot be fathomed.

Mr. NELSON: Some people think the limit is the goodwill and credit that we have in London, but I do not think that is the limit of our borrowing powers at all. If these works were carried on out of revenue, then the Treasurer would know that the limit to his expenditure would depend upon the patience and abilities of the community to find him the money; but as it is from loan, how much does the limit of expenditure increase? Certainly not more than twenty times. If a man has £1,000 a year, and borrows £20,000 on that, one would say he had got to the end of his tether. Well, where are we now? Our actual net revenue is very little more than £1,000,000 sterling, and we are now in debt for actual expenditure to the extent of something over £20,000,000. Then a great mistake is made in thinking we are working with capital. We are not working with capital; we are working upon credit. If we were working with capital we would enjoy the advantages of a capitalist, and be able to wait for an indefinite period to see the result of our investment; but as we are working on credit we can only afford to wait a very limited time—till the amount of interest becomes a burden on the community, and it is time for our borrowing powers to be exercised no further. With regard to those deviations—I am not talking with regard to whether the engineering work is good or not; I think everyone will admit it is—but look at it from the financial point of view. We got the line and paid for it out of loan; we now supersede part of that line by a new deviation, charge

that to loan, and pay interest on it; so that if things go on as they are doing now, the line will be paid for two or three times over before it is actually completed. As a matter of fact, once we start a line the construction of it is never at an end; it is one of those things that go on for ever. Every opportunity seems to be eagerly snatched at to shunt off on the Loan Fund disbursements that are properly chargeable to revenue. That is a great fault in the system, and if persisted in it can only end in ruin and disgrace. That is enough for that question. After the debt and public works, we pay for royalty £7,710—that is the Governor and suite. For defending ourselves against the Queen's enemies we are going to pay £50,302. For defending ourselves from ourselves—settling disputes amongst ourselves, and providing protection for life and property—we are going to pay the enormous sum of £255,436. That includes the judges, the Attorney-General, police, petty sessions, gaols, and the administration of those departments. But I take out of that £9,000 that will be refunded in the shape of fines and forfeits; thus we pay for law and justice £249,436. Then the Civil servants, including the Chief Secretary and the Treasurer and the Colonial Secretary—because they are the only three Ministers really required, the others being mere subsidiaries—the Agent-General, and the Registrar-General, and the Treasury Department, and the Auditor-General, and the Government Printer, and the steamers, and the Marine Board, and so on—the Civil Service proper costs £154,698. As against that we have refunds from fees of office and miscellaneous receipts, £32,000, leaving for the Civil Service proper—I do not think it a very large amount considering the services rendered—£102,698. Then the two chambers, the Executive and Legislative, cost £23,113. For non-effective services—pensions, insanity, charities, Dunwich, Royal Humane Society, Prevention of Cruelty Society—together we spend in that way the very nice little sum, which I do not suppose anybody grudges, of £89,634. Then for the important subject of education, in which I have included everything that could come under the designation of educational science and art—the Department of Education, the agricultural societies, considering them as educational institutions; Admiralty Survey, geological survey, Government Geologist, lecturers, and schools of mines, Meteorological Observer—putting these all together we pay £221,651 for education. To promote the health of the community we devote £12,331—central board, medical officers, analyst, and reserves and botanic gardens, which I treat as lungs for the community. Then, as far as our foreign affairs are concerned, New Guinea costs £1,200. Our net expenditure, then, is £1,592,955, which appears very much less than the Treasurer's estimate, because I have knocked a lot of the stuffing out of it. On the other side, in order to balance the account, we have to take the Customs, and give the Treasurer credit for £223,643; then we have to trench upon capital by the sale of land to the extent of £235,000, and even that does not make ends meet. We are left with a deficit of £69,135, as per the Treasurer's statement. On the whole, I think the outlook is very gloomy. I intend to oppose the *ad valorem* duties, but I have no particular objection to the stamp duties. That is a fair way of raising revenue, and falls more lightly on the community than the *ad valorem* duties. What I would suggest as a better way of getting out of the difficulty would be for one year to throw the burden of providing increased revenue upon property. This we could do in a very easy and complete way; but I am afraid it is a

way that would be very unpopular, and therefore a way we can hardly expect the present Government to adopt. That would be by the simple means of striking out the grants and aids to municipalities and divisional boards and marsupial boards. It would produce a revenue at once without any trouble and without any cost—even at a saving of cost—of £207,000, a great deal more than we require. If the Colonial Treasurer will adopt that suggestion, we ought to insist upon his abolishing those abominable, scandalous, wasteful, and barbarous *ad valorem* duties altogether, and striking off a few of those duties that apply to raw materials which are required to encourage the employment of labour.

Mr. FOOTE said: Mr. Fraser,—I do not intend to occupy many minutes.

Mr. STEVENSON: Hear, hear!

Mr. FOOTE: The hon. gentleman says "Hear, hear!" I am sure he is tired and wants to go home, after the very tedious oration we have just been listening to. I am somewhat in the same spirit, too. With reference to the closing remarks of the hon. member—that the Government should give no further help to municipalities and divisional boards—I certainly agree with him, and shall support him in any amendment he may propose to that effect. The result of such a step would be not only to greatly help the Government in their financial arrangements, but it would prevent municipalities and divisional boards from running into that reckless expenditure they are likely to do when they can borrow their money so easily. They would have to fall back then on an increased direct taxation upon land and property; persons would know what they were paying, and would have more control over the expenditure than they have at present. It is not my intention, Mr. Fraser, to go into the Financial Statement. I did not rise for that purpose, because I consider the question has been pretty well thrashed out, but to make a few remarks with reference to *ad valorem* duties. I think they are the best and most equitable form of taxation that could possibly be devised; and a Government must have revenue, otherwise it cannot carry on the business of the country. I am happy to hear from the last speaker that England has arrived at such a state of bliss that any individual who chooses to deny himself of tobacco, malt liquor, whisky, and, I think, tea, need not pay any taxation at all. There are, no doubt, many who deny themselves of those luxuries—some on principle, others—the majority—because they cannot get them. *Ad valorem* duties and special duties fall, in the first instance, upon the commercial interests. It is the commercial men who have to find the money for the Custom House. A firm carrying on a business which takes £20,000 a year cash will, on the imposition of fresh duties, require £5,000 a year more capital to carry it on. Although the consumer does really pay the tax in the long run, yet the commercial man has to find it in the first instance. When increased taxation is imposed it is always in bad times; when trade is dull and money scarce, it takes a considerable time before the merchant can raise the goods that he has in stock to that extent that he ought to be entitled to do. To do that takes from three to six months.

Mr. ALAND: But he has not paid the increased duties upon them.

Mr. FOOTE: But when the duty is removed or lessened—as it was when these very duties were reduced from $7\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. to 5 per cent.—the merchant had to reduce his prices the very day. He must always come down at the very moment; but he cannot go up in the same way. Not only are the *ad valorem* duties the most equitable, but they can be collected at no additional cost.

Besides, many of the articles on which special rates are levied will not bear any further impost. Without enumerating them, I will mention one, in reply to the argument used by the hon. member for Rosewood last night, that if protective duties were placed upon commodities that could be made in the colony, it would result in manufacturing of various kinds being erected in the colony. I will take the article of starch, which is by no means a luxury now, whatever it may once have been. The tax on starch exceeds 30 per cent., and yet that has never had the effect of causing it to be manufactured within the colony. An observation that fell from some hon. member yesterday seems to have taken hon. members by surprise. I refer to the over-expenditure on the duplication of the railway between Brisbane and Ipswich. I was under the impression that the work was being done under the estimated cost, and I am very much surprised to learn that the estimated cost has been largely exceeded. But I can understand to a considerable degree how that is. Everybody who travels along the line notices the extravagant expenditure on stations between Brisbane and Oxley. They are the talk of every traveller on the railway. The way they are being built is an absolute waste of public money, which might have been saved without any inconvenience to traffic or passengers; and the whole of the expenditure is not finished yet. There is another matter I wish to allude to, which is the deficiency in the revenue. I do not consider that that deficiency has arisen so much from general depression of trade; I think it has arisen more from the lack of receipts from the Lands Department in consequence of the inauguration of the new Land Act, and from the very serious weather that followed upon the introduction of that measure. Some hon. members seem to charge the hon. the Colonial Treasurer with want of apprehension or foresight in not being able to look forward and see that such an alteration in the Land Act could not but have a very serious effect upon the income from that source; but, sir, I know from conversations with that hon. gentleman that before the Act was brought into force that matter was talked over. Of course, at that time, things being in a flourishing state, he could not have foreseen the extent to which the lack of income would have affected the general revenue of the colony. There is another matter in connection with railways to which I wish to refer. It was pressed upon the Government from time to time, year after year, in this House to reduce the railway freights. That has been done to a very considerable extent, and I think it was a very unwise step to take. That reduction was made in order to reach a trade which was more imaginary than real, and I am sorry that it took place at the time it did, because I am satisfied that if it had not taken place then it would not have taken place now. Mr. Fraser, the hon. the Treasurer's proposed alterations in the tariff afford me another opportunity of bringing forward the question which I have had upon my mind for a long time past in reference to wheat—that is, to again ask this Committee to take off the duty upon wheat. I may say that I intend to take this opportunity of doing so, and trust that I shall receive the support of hon. members. From the return for which I moved, showing the quantity of wheat grown in the colony, and the amount of duty collected thereon from the beginning of 1881 to the 30th June, 1886, I find that in 1881 the quantity grown was 39,612 bushels; in 1882, 145,752; in 1883, 42,842; in 1884, 195,727; in 1885, 53,686; making a total of 477,619 bushels. The amount of duty paid during those six years was:—In 1881, £8 0s. 6d.; 1882, £1,179 3s.; 1883, £280 9s. 6d.;

1886—2 L

1884, £619 9s. 1d.; 1885, £184 6s.; and for 1886, £435 1s. 11d.; making a total of £2,706 10s. That being the amount of duty paid upon wheat during those six years, it cannot be said that it is a very important item. It shows that the importation of wheat has been very fluctuating during that period. It has been imported principally by the up-country millers—in fact, there are none anywhere else in the colony that I am aware of except on the Darling Downs; and when their crops have failed they have had to import wheat to carry on their operations. I do not intend to go fully into this matter to-night, but will go into it more at length when I place the motion formally before the Committee. But before I sit down I shall just state that the quantity of flour imported into Queensland in 1881 was 22,319 tons; in 1882, 27,398 tons; in 1883, 27,253 tons; in 1884, 33,431 tons; in 1885, 33,819 tons; and for the portion of the present year up to the end of June, 17,570 tons—the aggregate for the six years being 166,791 tons. Now, I would observe that the increase of work which would be given to the population by the grinding of this quantity of flour within the colony of Queensland would treble many times the amount of duty the Government have received upon wheat during the period I have mentioned; and not only so, but the duty upon the machinery which would be imported in order to work the mills to grind this wheat would, in the first year, more than pay the duty that has been paid during that time. My object in trying to introduce this measure is not in the interests of any particular party, or for the protection of any particular person, but simply in the interests of the colony, and with a view of giving work to the population when they arrive here. I do not intend to interfere with the duty upon pollard or upon bran, but simply with the duty imposed upon the introduction of wheat. I shall try and have my amendment ready so that it may be circulated amongst hon. members before Tuesday next.

Mr. MACFARLANE said: Mr. Fraser,—I am very sorry the hon. gentleman who addressed the Committee last from the other side is not in his place, because I was going to congratulate him upon his long speech. Long speeches, as a rule, are not very entertaining or interesting, but I think the one we heard to-night was rather an exception to that rule, and I liked many things in it. Those hon. members who have had a seat in the House for a number of years will remember that the Financial Statements of the present Colonial Treasurer have always been roseate. They have always promised well, but somehow or other the anticipations they have created have seldom been realised. The speech delivered on the present occasion by that hon. gentleman is no exception to the rule. He begins by telling us how great the country is in which we live, how thankful the people ought to be for the privilege of being inhabitants of such a country, of what the country has done for them, and so forth. That is all right, and perhaps it is all true; but after making such a statement and holding out such expectations, after telling us there is to be an increase in the production of wool and crops, and an increased profit on the railways, he yet proposes to impose additional taxation on the country. Now, the question before the Committee is not so much to dispute the Treasurer's statement, but, knowing there is a deficit, to adopt his scheme or devise a better one to meet the deficit. We cannot deny there is a deficit; but seeing that we have had four years of very great depression, caused by the drought, is it wise—is it politic—to increase the taxation of the country? If we had four years of prosperity and a deficit was presented, then the people would be able to bear

increased taxation; but it is the last straw that breaks the camel's back, as the saying is; and to propose additional taxation after four years of depression caused through the drought, is not a wise thing to do, because no matter what hon. members opposite may say, the drought has to bear a great proportion of the blame. No matter what our sources of revenue are, I say that the Customs, the railway receipts, and the land receipts—every one of these three sources of revenue has been affected by the drought. If it had not been so we should have got greater returns from our railways, better returns from our Customs, and more land would have been taken up, consequently bringing in more revenue from land. Therefore, we cannot blame the Treasurer for the deficit, but I think we can go so far as to blame him for this: it is the duty of the Treasurer to look ahead and devise the best scheme for meeting the deficit as it comes upon us. And there are many ways in which that can be done. Of course, it is a very easy way of collecting additional taxation by means of *ad valorem* duties, but let us look at that. It has been said by several speakers on the other side, and I quite agree with them, that these *ad valorem* duties, or even fixed duties, press more heavily on the poor than on the rich. Well, can we not get over the difficulty in this way? The Treasurer tells us he has a balance of £45,000 on account of consolidated revenue, and he also says he has a balance of £29,000 from the Surplus Revenue Fund. It is said that the Surplus Revenue Fund means nothing, but yet there was taken out of it last year no less than £22,038 16s. 10d. This fund shows to credit at the present time £29,955, which, added to the balance of consolidated revenue, makes a total of £75,000. That is the sum by which the Treasurer is deficient, and he expects to relieve that by imposing additional *ad valorem* duties. It may be said that this £29,000 is not there. Well, if it is not, it should not be in the table.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: It is all there, but it is appropriated and not expended.

Mr. MACFARLANE: Well, take the £45,000 to credit of the Consolidated Revenue Account; the deficiency is not very much after all, and ought not to be made up by imposing a tax which presses so heavily on the poor man. Now, we have a great number of highly paid Civil servants, and they might well have their salaries reduced for two years, the time during which the Treasurer thinks it will be necessary to continue this new taxation. I would not think of reducing the salaries standing at £300 and under, but instead of imposing these duties which will press on the poor I say it would have been far better to reduce the wages of those Civil servants whose salaries are above £300, and they would not feel it, because, if the salaries were reduced by, say, 10 per cent., the Civil servants would have saved 2½ per cent. on the *ad valorem* duties. The difference would not be so great, only about 7½ per cent. or thereabouts. I think, therefore, Mr. Fraser, that some alternative scheme might have been proposed by the Treasurer, so as not to press so heavily upon the poor of the land. There is another thing that I think the Treasurer might have taken into consideration, and that is the increased population that will very likely come into the country this year. Last year the increase was 11,000, and we may fairly expect the same this year. Each person contributes, through the Customs, £3 a year, and 11,000 at £3 would give us £33,000. That, added to the balance the Treasurer has, would meet the deficit that he expects to have. I think the deficit is so small

that the Treasurer is scarcely justified in putting on more taxation. The drought having broken up, the increase from the three sources I have mentioned, I believe, will be quite sufficient to meet all the deficit the Treasurer expects; and with an increased revenue from land, Customs, and railways, and the increase caused by an influx of population, there will be no necessity for increased taxation. Now, I warn the Government that they are doing one of the worst things for themselves and for their own popularity in thrusting upon the people an increase in the *ad valorem* duties at the present time. They were returned to office because the people thought they were better than their predecessors, and no doubt they are. I think so myself; but will they be able to take away the impression from the bulk of the people that they are not doing their duty? There is great grumbling now. I have heard a great deal of it already, and I warn the Government that they are doing a thing which will do more to damage them in the eyes of the people than all the opposition on the other side of the House. There is another little item, if all other resources failed, which the Treasurer might have fallen back upon, with the consent of the Chief Secretary. I refer to the Defence Force. I think we are too easily agitated and scared by the fear of an invasion of Russians or any other people when we can be induced to spend such an amount of money in tinsel show—I can call it nothing else. If you look over the list you will find that there is an officer, a sergeant, a driller, or a bandsman for every fighting man in the service. Perhaps that is a little exaggeration; but the quantity of money paid for the superintendence of the Defence Force is a very serious item. While I do not blame the Treasurer for making provision against a deficit, I think some better means might have been devised instead of offending the whole country. It would have been far better to take the amount required out of a few rather than place a burden on the whole of the people, because, as the Treasurer says, it is only a temporary expedient. Anyone having over £300 a year would be able for two years to bear a small reduction; and that would be better than making the whole of the people suffer after having suffered from the depression that has existed during the last four years on account of the drought. I hope the expectations of the Treasurer will be realised—more than realised—and I believe they will. He is very sanguine, and I think I am a little more sanguine than he is, for I believe that the time will come when we shall be able to do without taxation at all. Having such faith in the resources of the country, I believe that before the end of the year the balance at the Treasury will be on the right side again.

Mr. ALAND said: Mr. Fraser,—I have as little sympathy with the highly paid officers of the Civil Service as any member, but I do not think that reducing their salaries is the way to pay for the deficiency likely to arise during the present year. I think that if salaries are to be reduced, they should be reduced on other grounds. If they are too high, they are too high whether the colony is in a state of prosperity or the reverse; but I cannot see that because a deficiency is likely to occur a portion only of the community is to make up that deficiency. I am somewhat in sympathy with the hon. member for Ipswich as far as regards the vote for the Defence Force. Like him, I have always felt that that was a piece of extravagance which the colony could ill afford, but I was somewhat reconciled to it by some remarks which the Chief Secretary made when he was in the North. He gave his hearers to understand that if they knew as much

as he did—if they were aware of the dangers that really threatened the colony—they would consider that he had done the right thing, or words to that effect. Now, I have been expecting that the Chief Secretary before now, seeing that the danger to which he then referred is past, would have informed us what particular item of news he was in possession of at the time.

The PREMIER: Do you read the papers?

Mr. ALAND: Do I read the papers? Of course I do; and like the rest of the people I thought there was something of a scare, but the manner in which the Premier spoke conveyed the impression to my mind that he was in possession of more precise information than we could gather from the public prints. The Premier seems to think that the danger is not altogether over yet. Possibly it is not. Only within the last day or two we have read of wars and rumours of wars, but I am still of opinion that our Defence Force is not the force we require to protect the interests of this colony. I think that if we want our colony protected it should not be by maintaining an expensive land force such as we have, but by a naval force.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: That would be more expensive.

Mr. ALAND: I believe it would be of far more practical utility, and that is the main point. I am in sympathy with the hon. member for Ipswich when he talks of the highly paid officials and their dandified manners. It is perfectly sickening to hon. members, and to members of the community generally, to walk down Queen street and see the dandified airs of these military men. It seems as if they are paid for nothing but walking up and down Queen street swinging their canes, wearing their gloves, and doing other things which they ought not to do. I think the hon. member for Northern Downs is to be congratulated on having made almost the longest Budget speech that has been made this session. I rather think he is trying to emulate the gentleman in the New South Wales Parliament who has the credit of having made the longest speech made in any Australian Parliament. When he was speaking it struck me that if we were to go back to the good old times—because the hon. member seemed to want to abolish taxation altogether, and he referred more particularly to the cheap manner in which the stamp duties were collected, something like £140,000 a year being collected by a man and a boy—it struck me that we might go back to the system in force in the good old times, and let everybody in the colony go up and be taxed and pay his money. That would be a cheap and simple way of collecting the revenue, though I question whether the people would submit to it in these days. Now about this 2½ per cent. increase in the *ad valorem* duties. I do not like it, and I certainly was in hopes that the Treasurer would have found some other means of making up his deficit, or that he would have allowed the deficit to have stood over. I know that there are very serious objections to that sort of thing, and it is better to pay our way if we can; but we cannot always do that. In ordinary life we cannot always square our year's income with our year's expenditure; but it does not trouble us very much, because we look forward to better times, and we are prepared to let next year make up for the losses of last year, and I suppose it is the same with Governments as it is with individuals. In this respect I think we cannot blame the Government so very much for having been behindhand in their anticipations of last year. I suppose there is scarcely a member of the Committee whose income during the last twelve months was really quite equal to his expectations. I know, at any rate, that my income

was certainly not so good as I thought it would be; but I am hoping, like the Colonial Treasurer, that the clouds are rolling by, and there are better times in store for us. I remember when the Land Bill was going through the House the Colonial Treasurer said he anticipated that the revenue would possibly suffer by it, and that it would be a great deal better for the Government to issue Treasury bills for any deficit there might be—he did not say imposing taxation—than sell the lands of the colony. I suppose there were some very serious objections to Treasury bills; but I confess, with the hon. member for Ipswich, that this 2½ per cent. extra *ad valorem* duty is one that will not find favour in the colony. It does press unevenly—there is very little taxation that does not; but this proposed increase will affect men with small incomes. I do not think it will affect them to the extent mentioned by the hon. member for Northern Downs. I did not quite understand him; but I daresay he understood it himself. I think he was a little mixed up. He was talking about the amount per head which was paid by individuals in the colony, and upon that he bases his calculation that if a man received 10s. per day, or about £156 per year, and he had four or five in family, he would pay something like £21 in taxes. If the people of the colony were taxed individually, then the calculation would be right enough; but we know that there are many men in the colony earning less than 10s. per day, who have something like twelve in family to support, and according to the hon. gentleman's argument all those men's income would go to the State in taxation, and there would be nothing left for them to live upon. Let me say a word about the cause of the depression. The depression is generally set down to the drought, and the falling-off in our revenue is set down to the working of the Land Act. There is no doubt that, so far as the Land Act is concerned, we are not getting the revenue that we were getting under the old Act, and nobody expected that we would.

Mr. BLACK: Oh!

Mr. ALAND: We expect to get a good revenue out of it by-and-by. It is quite certain that we cannot get that revenue at once. It is some two years since the Act was passed, but it is not twelve months since it came into operation, and not more than three or four months since it came into active operation. Would anyone take up grazing farms, or even agricultural lands, during the times which we have just passed through? I do not think anybody would venture his money in any such thing at all. What does the hon. member for Mackay say with regard to the sugar industry? Why, that people will not invest their money in it, because it is not exactly a paying concern, but it will pay enough by-and-by. Things will brighten with the sugar interest as well as with all other interests. To my mind the cause of the depression—more than the drought, and more than the Land Act—has been the exceptionally low prices which all produce has realised for the last two years or more. We know that wool, hides, tallow, and other things besides—but these more particularly—have been lower of late than they have been for a number of years; but we are thankful to know that the prices of these things are now hardening, and that they are continuing to go up, and we hope that very soon they will realise the prices they have been known to realise before. Then those persons engaged in pastoral pursuits will have some encouragement to spend their money; other persons will go into these pursuits, and, of course, will have to spend money in order to carry them on. The Opposition, of course, have told the Government that they should decrease their expenditure. I know that it is almost

impossible for members of this Committee in going through the Estimates to say where those Estimates should be reduced, unless perhaps in items such as the Defence Force and one or two others; but it is impossible so far as departmental expenditure is concerned for ordinary members of the Committee to say where it can be reduced. I believe the Ministers know, and they might possibly use the pruning knife if they were so disposed. I have noticed that although the hon. member for Townsville, notably, dwelt upon this subject of pruning down the Estimates, when the Government of which he was a member came into office, they did not prune them down very much. The way they pruned them down was to cut off a good many of the public works of the colony, and they saved a considerable sum through the dismissals from the Ipswich workshops, which must have considerably reduced the expenditure. If we take the Estimates for 1877-8, the last year the previous Liberal Ministry was in office, we find that the expenditure was £1,543,000. In 1878-9, which included half the year of the old Douglas Ministry and the past half-year of the McIlwraith Ministry, there was an increase of something like £130,000, the expenditure amounting to £1,678,000. Next year there was an increase, and the year following there was also an increase. Indeed, if we take the Estimates right through we shall find that there has been an increase every year since the colony has been in existence. The increase that has been going on during the administration of the present Government is very considerably in advance of what it has been previously; but, as I pointed out on a former occasion, that increase is caused, not so much by a swelling of the Civil Service as by the very large appropriations which have been made for public works. As to the proposed succession duties, I am disposed to go with them. Certainly, as far as the lower amounts are concerned, there is a reduction in the taxation on what may be termed the working classes, those whose savings are small, because under the present law a duty of $1\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. is payable on personality of any amount. But, according to the proposals of the Government, no duty at all will be payable up to £100, and above that amount and not exceeding £1,000, only 1 per cent., so that there is a reduction in that particular. The Premier has said something about tinkering with the duties, and has intimated that he thinks it undesirable to be always tinkering with the fixed duties.

The PREMIER: What I said was that if we proposed any change in the duties we should be accused of tinkering with the tariff.

Mr. ALAND: I think it would be a very good thing if we really did begin to tinker a little bit with our duties. We want a revised tariff. It is many years now since the present tariff came into operation. It was in force when Mr. McLean was Treasurer.

The PREMIER: When Mr. Bell was Treasurer—in 1870.

Mr. ALAND: I think the *ad valorem* duties were instituted about the time Mr. McLean was Treasurer of the colony, and that was in 1866, when 10 per cent. was put on. Let me here say that the members of the present Government, or some of them, were really the ones who reduced that taxation, a thing they very seldom get credit for. They get blamed for a great deal, but very seldom get credit for any good things they do. Last night when the hon. member for Townsville was speaking about the debit balance the Liberal Administration left—they never left a credit balance, of course—he forgot to say anything about the sum to the credit of the Railway Reserves Fund. He forgot also to say that he was one of the conspirators who conspired just before the

outgoing of the Government to embarrass the Treasury as much as possible. Did not Sir Thomas McIlwraith, when electioneering up north, make a boast of how he had helped to embarrass the Treasury? I think, perhaps, these things ought to be remembered sometimes when we are talking about the failures of the party at present in power. However, I hope that before long the Treasurer of this colony will see his way to revise the tariff, and let heavier duties be placed upon articles of luxury which those who have the means can pay for, and let us have the things of ordinary consumption, which every working man and every man with a small income must necessarily buy for himself and family, admitted into the colony as cheaply as possible.

Mr. W. BROOKES said: Mr. Fraser,—I am almost afraid to rise at this time, but I will not take very long in what I have to say. I do not think I should have risen but for the remarks of the speaker who has just sat down. There was a great deal in the speech of the hon. member for Northern Downs with which I agree. He made a long speech and there was a good deal in it that was very well worth being remembered, particularly when he called the attention of the Committee to our habit of going in for loans. Now, I wish to put in my protest against this habit of making the colony live upon loans. I agree with the hon. member for Northern Downs when he said that this system of living upon loans would lead us into trouble. Although I am generally supposed to be in accord with the present Government, yet I must say I do not like the Financial Statement of the Treasurer, because I do not see in it any large statesmanlike views respecting the future. It seems to me this is exactly the financial statement we might expect from the bookkeeper of a large firm, and not from a gentleman possessed of the extended views of the Colonial Treasurer. With reference to the revision of the tariff, I could have wished that the Colonial Treasurer had not touched the tariff at all, unless he touched it to some effect. I want to see some intelligent design in any attempt at revising the tariff. I consider that most of the remarks that have been made about what the Colonial Treasurer has done with the tariff are rather wide of the mark. They only seem to include the idea of a tariff for revenue purposes. Now, I say that the tariff should be revised from beginning to end with the view to the protection of local industries, and that that view should be the first consideration. It should be altered with the view of securing revenue to some extent, but mainly with a view to the encouragement and fostering of local industries, and therefore I do not like this proposal to increase the *ad valorem* duties by $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. I will ask the permission of the Colonial Treasurer, and of the House, just to give a little sketch of the history of Canada for the last seven years. In 1879 Canada was in a state of great depression, and had a heavy deficit, and it was absorbing the consideration of her best men to say how she was to get out of the difficulty. The position of Canada in 1879 was very like that of Queensland now. Sir John Macdonald became Premier, and there was a gentleman, Mr. Tilley, Minister for Finance. This gentleman went to England and the Continent, his object being to raise a loan of three millions of money. Before he went he made arrangements that while he was away there should come in from all quarters of Canada information upon the tariff and matters of trade. Information came in from farmers, financiers, employers from all quarters, and from every class in the community. Mr. Tilley succeeded in raising the loan of £3,000,000, and on his return he engaged a staff of clerks and had all the information collected, carefully arranged

and sorted, and on the basis of that information he prepared a tariff, and that tariff became the tariff of Canada. Hon. members can certify for themselves the truth of what I am going to state. That tariff was a protective tariff. Under that tariff locomotives were charged 25 per cent. duty. More than that—hon. members on the other side seem to have had their hair made to stand on end by any duty being placed on machinery. They were not so afraid in Canada.

"On locomotive engines, on stationary and other steam engines, and boilers, and on other machinery composed of iron, or of which iron is a component part of chief value—25 per cent. *ad valorem*."

So that they were not afraid of that there.

Mr. NORTON: They are somewhat afraid of it now.

Mr. W. BROOKES: I will come to that by-and-by. I understood the hon. member for Port Curtis to say "They are somewhat afraid of it now." Very well; I will come to that. Then on blankets—I will just read it:—

"Shawls, blankets, and flannels of every description cloths, doeskins, cassimeres, tweeds, coatings, overcoatings, cloakings, felt cloth of every description, horse-collar cloths, yarn, knitting yarn, fingering yarn, worsted yarn under No. 30; knitted goods, viz., shirts, drawers, and hosiery of every description—7½c. per pound, and in addition thereto 20 per cent. *ad valorem*."

On clothes, ready-made and wearing apparel, on all sorts of slop goods, 10c. per pound, and in addition 25 per cent. *ad valorem*. I will not weary the Committee with reading more of them. I merely point out the principle on which that tariff was formed. I believe nothing was left out. What was the consequence? I call the attention of the Committee to it, because here we are with our colony in a fix, and the Colonial Treasurer at his wits' end to know what to do.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: No.

Mr. BROOKES: At all events, perhaps he will receive this statement with a better grace, taking very dubious plans to get us out of it. What was the consequence of the adoption of this plan in Canada? From the moment of the beginning to work upon this tariff Canada began to prosper, and she continued to prosper until 1884. In 1884 there happened a singular thing, to which I call the profound attention of the Ministry. There was an election. The Parliament of Canada lasts five years, and in 1884 there came an election, and this tariff—this protective tariff—had been the means of so reviving everything in Canada that the whole of the Ministry went in again with flying colours. I commend that to the attention of the Ministry here. Their time is coming. Their hour-glass has not as much sand to be deducted from it as it had. I really do think that the measures that have been proposed, and especially the 2½ per cent. sudden rise, is not calculated to increase the confidence of the colony in the foresight and forecast of the present Ministry. I really think that, although I am prepared to support them almost through thick and thin—let me explain for the benefit of the hon. member for Port Curtis that I only say that because I am not going to jump out of the frying-pan into the fire. However, the right men are apt to spring up when they are wanted. I do think that the time has come when it behoves all thinking men in this House and everywhere in the colony to ponder the question, and see if, instead of this wretched system of borrowing, we cannot contrive some plan by which to keep the money we have in the colony and make a little money within ourselves. With reference to these succession duties, though I do not pay much attention to this matter, I consider it a very fair way

of raising revenue. It acts, at all events, upon property, and the pauper certainly gets out of it. I should like to see the £100 raised to something like £250. I think that would be a proper thing to do. However, that is only a matter of opinion. I would invite the Committee, the Ministry, and the Colonial Treasurer especially, to give over this idea of tormenting us every year with a Financial Statement which is a mere jumble of figures that no fellow can understand. I do not believe that is the proper way to put the affairs of the colony before us. I want to see fewer figures, and simpler figures. I want some plan, which I think it is possible to establish, by which we can begin to make some money for ourselves in this colony.

Mr. KELLETT said: Mr. Fraser,—I think we had better adjourn the debate, as there are still a number of members who wish to speak upon the question, and we cannot possibly finish it to-night.

The PREMIER said: Mr. Fraser,—Of course, a matter of this sort ought to be fully discussed; but at the same time, in the case of measures of this kind, which are always retrospective in their operation, it is usual to carry on the debate as fast as possible, because it is very undesirable to leave people in uncertainty as to what they are liable to pay; and it must be understood that the adjournment of the debate till the next sitting day means a postponement of the whole question for an additional week. That is practically the effect of it. If the resolutions are adopted this evening, the Bills could not be introduced till Tuesday, and could not possibly be sent to the Legislative Council till this day week. If the debate is adjourned it will retard it till the following week. I would also point out to hon. members that an opportunity will arise again for discussing the taxation proposals. This is only a preliminary resolution to form the foundation of Bills, which may be discussed in the ordinary way. We certainly hoped the debate would have been finished to-night. Of course, it was not expected that one hon. member would take up more than two hours to himself; that was an unexpected episode of the debate. I sincerely hope that no more hon. members wish to do the same thing.

Mr. NORTON said: Mr. Fraser,—I think the hon. member might as well consent to the adjournment. I know a few members who want to speak.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said: Mr. Fraser,—Of course, it is no use persisting in pressing the resolutions to-night if hon. members are not disposed to go on. I think the criticism of the Financial Statement has been pretty exhaustive; and of course all the debate on the question of taxation will come on again when the Bills are submitted. I would point out that the debate on this Financial Statement has occupied a considerably longer time than any previous one.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: No.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: It is certainly usual to finish the financial debate in one evening. However, as it seems to be the desire of some hon. members that the question should be discussed more fully, I move, Mr. Fraser, that you leave the chair, report no progress, and ask leave to sit again.

Question put and passed.

The House resumed; the CHAIRMAN reported no progress, and obtained leave to sit again on Tuesday next.

ADJOURNMENT.

On the motion of the PREMIER, the House adjourned at twenty-two minutes to 11 o'clock.